

**ELITE BEHAVIOUR IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING IN  
MAURITIUS**

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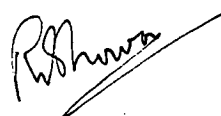
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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
the University of Tasmania**

**Department of Teacher Education  
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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for an award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Sharma', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to understand how educational policy in a particular area was made and implemented in Mauritius. A decision of the Minister (1979), that being the declaration of his intent to launch a Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius, was selected. This involved an exploration of the events that transpired between the period January 1979 until April 1986. The study covered the activities of three Ministers who occupied the Education Portfolio at three different periods.

Research questions and the conceptual framework were used as a guide to reconstruct the Primary Schooling Reform scenario illustrating how the policy-making elite took decisions, how these were further shaped and implemented. The information was analysed in accordance with the factors of the conceptual framework that was designed by drawing from a large body of literature on the policy domain, derived from the developed and developing countries. The conceptual framework was, in essence, a model for comparative study of policy formation by Hofferbert (1974) which illustrated that the policy domain had to be understood within the environment of the political system that comprises the following factors: historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, elite behaviour and politically relevant incidents. These factors were evident in the review of literature from developing countries. They were also evident in the literature from developing countries except that the Hofferbert model had to be modified to include the international aid factor that was intended to facilitate the understanding of the dependency concept which is a critical factor in the politics of small island nations among developing countries. The modified Hofferbert model was

considered wide enough to provide a comprehensive framework for application in the policy domain in Mauritius.

The findings reveal the existence of a policy-making elite that comprised a very small group of people, namely the Minister, the Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Permanent Secretary. Second, an understanding of elite behaviour was unintelligible outside the context and that historical and sociopolitical factors served as a backdrop to elite behaviour. The set of constraints within which the elite worked and the way the events occurred have also been illuminated.

Third, the study questioned many things that were taken for granted and also brought to light important things that were neglected. For instance, policy development was not only about stating principles and strategies but also about the concern of personnel at all levels.

Fourth, the Minister's statement to launch the Primary Schooling Reform was supposed to achieve on an islandwide scale some recognizably significant changes. Hence, the definition of policy by Harman (1983: 97) as a statement that included what was intended and what were the outcomes of that intention, goes unchallenged. Finally, the Education Portfolio was involved at each stage of the policy-making process. These processes are therefore considered as markers in an ongoing process rather than separate categories with meaning of their own.

It is apparent that politically relevant incidents like elections had a long term effect on the actions of the elite. This study also revealed that the elite behaved rationally but that it was difficult to design a rational model of elite behaviour because rationality cannot be easily measured. Nevertheless, rationality is considered here in the sense that policy development did not dismantle the existing system but rather developed on that system: the elite adapted to changing circumstances. With this approach, the elite minimised the risks and brought about change that was largely not resisted by parents and children.

There is a need for more research in island nations such as Mauritius before a more comprehensive view of the elite actions as they are influenced by the society around them can be fully understood.



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# ABBREVIATIONS

CDB	=	Curriculum Development Board
CDC	=	Curriculum Development Centre
CP	=	Certificate of Primary Education
EVS	=	Environmental Studies
GTU	=	Government Teachers' Union
MCA	=	Mauritius College of the Air
MCE	=	Mauritius College of Education
MES	=	Mauritius Examinations Syndicate
MGI	=	Mahatma Gandhi Institute
MIE	=	Mauritius Institute of Education
OL	=	Oriental Languages
PEO	=	Principal Education Officer
PSLC	=	Primary School Leaving Certificate
PSSA	=	Private Secondary Schools' Authority
PTA	=	Parents and Teachers Association

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## **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to understand how educational policy in a particular area was made and implemented in Mauritius. The then Minister of Education in Mauritius, Hon. Sir K. Jagatsingh, made an announcement at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) in September 1979 that he would go ahead with the Primary Schooling Reform aimed at improving the quality of primary education. The statement of intention also comprised a declaration of the theme of the reform, that being the search for improvement in the primary sector. The period covered in this study extended from January 1979 to April 1986 and presents the engagement of three different Ministers. The first served from January 1979 to August 1982; the second from August 1982 to June 1983; and the third from June 1983 until April 1986. Each of the Ministers will be represented in this study as Minister (1979), Minister (1982) and Minister (1983) to avoid confusion. Likewise, the Ministry of Education of Mauritius which is headed by the Minister is referred to in this study as the Ministry.

With the Independence of Mauritius in 1968, there was growing realisation that the most important resource of the island was its manpower. For a modern economy to function, it was recognised that its labour force should be prepared to acquire the relevant physical and mental skills, and the right values and attitudes. It was therefore essential that the emphasis which, by tradition was laid on the quantity aspect of education, should be shifted to quality. Massive expansion of the education system occurred as a result of the move from an almost free universal primary education to free secondary and university education in 1977. This event marked a turning point in the history of Mauritius education and social development. Independence also brought with it an added challenge for further equity, social justice and a greater realisation of the aspirations of the common person.

Against this background of change, Mauritius achieved a fairly high degree of success in literacy and numeracy at the primary level. Yet the primary sector remained the major target for criticism and dissatisfaction. It was generally regarded not to be flexible enough to respond to the changes. "The Future in our Hands: Mauritian Education for Today and Tomorrow" that appeared in January 1979, followed by "Pre-primary and Primary Education in Mauritius: Laying the Foundations - Report of the Commission of Enquiry set up by His Excellency the Governor General", in March 1979, highlighted the salient weaknesses of the primary sector: drop-outs, low attainments, low status of teachers, poor teacher professionalism, inappropriate curriculum, examination and credential oriented education. There was massive wastage and those who were the utter failures of schooling, what Torsten Husen calls "educational underclass," could not be fitted in the world of work.

What the Minister's (1979) announcement meant was perceived by the MIE, the only institution responsible for teacher training and curriculum development in Mauritius, to be concerned with the improvement of the quality of primary education through a reorientation of the system in a manner that was compatible with the needs of the children and the country's socioeconomic requirements. It was also evident that there were no financial commitments on the part of the Ministry and that the Commission of Enquiry in 1979 had not dealt with the budgeting requirements of the reform. This shortcoming was consistent with what Beeby (1967: 15) saw as the usual procedure for a commission in education, namely, "to draw up sweeping recommendations for reform within its terms of reference, and then either to present them to the government uncosted or to sketch out a generalised estimate of costs after the recommendations on policy have been decided."

This study is intended to provide insights into the processes of policy and the problems that beset policy-makers in island nations by focusing in this instance on ministerial decision-making to launch a Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius that heralded a series of decisions related to reform at the primary level in that country.

This study is intended to provide insights into the processes of policy and the problems that beset policy-makers in island nations by focusing in this instance on ministerial decision-making to launch a Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius that heralded a series of decisions related to reform at the primary level in that country. This involved a study of policy-related issues that emerged both before the Minister's (1979) declaration of intent and after the declaration. It is an illumination of the processes concerned with the policy-related issues as well as the forces influencing the behaviour of the key actors.

It is noteworthy that the statement of the Minister (1979) was not officially presented to the Cabinet of Ministers or to the Parliament; it was not found in any official or legal document of the government and it was the Minister's own initiative towards reform of the primary sector.

An associated purpose of this study was to develop and refine a model to assist in the description and analysis of policy-related processes in an island nation such as Mauritius. Such a model is intended to serve as an aid in gaining insight into what government actually does and how specific processes or particular decisions concerning the intentions are linked to the environmental contexts. Clay and Schaffer (1984: 2), citing Griffin, stated: "Rather than criticising governments for failing to attain, or offering advice on how to attain a non-goal, it would be instructive if more time were devoted to analysing what governments actually do and why."

## **The Context**

Mauritius is characterised by the diversity of its cultures and is intended to be a model of tolerance and peaceful co-existence that encompasses not only the various religions but also the different languages. "Multiculturalism," "cultural pluralism," "diversity in cultures," "unity in diversity" are some of the clichés used to describe this country.

Ministry, to "Mauricianize" education by formulating and implementing policies that would make education relevant to the needs of society and, at the same time, "democratise" education to bring about social justice and equality in terms of educational provision and opportunities for employment for all ethnic or religious groups irrespective of class, creed, colour, or gender.

The multi-party democratic style of Mauritius government is essentially based along the Westminster pattern and, unlike many of the democracies on the African Continent, it has been instrumental in uplifting and synthesizing within its institutions the cultural traditions as well as contemporary culture. One of the most significant institutions is education. Though Mauritius comprises many ethnic groups, there is no hegemony of a single group over the rest of the population. It is a society of minorities that has established a basis for collaboration, thereby contributing to group solidarity and the formation of political coalitions essential for the progress and prosperity of the country.

Education is shaped by an environment of social, technological, economic, ecological, legal and political factors. Moreover, while the Ministry does have sole responsibility for policy-making, it acts alongside other Ministries, non-governmental agencies, corporate or parastatal bodies, ethnic groups and individuals.

The sugar economy that has always been the backbone of the economy is gradually yielding its place to the textile industry, with tourism in third place. This shift in the economy has an impact on the educational system which in turn has to respond to the changes by acting as a major booster of economic growth. The public as well as the private sector work hand in hand.

The cultural and economic ties with Africa, Asia, and Europe are well-established and, even after independence, aid of various types was given by developed countries through multilateral agreements for socioeconomic development.

In this study, cross-system comparisons are made with small island and archipelago states of the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and South

Pacific. Most of the nations are ex-colonial countries, members of the British Commonwealth, with a similar cultural context, although many of them are dissimilar to Mauritius in some respects. This comparative element in the study has enabled the researcher to extend his experience by making him aware of the ways policies are made, what the influences are and how they are executed in other lands. This enhances his "imagination of question-prompting, cause-seeking and effect-measuring alternatives, rational models, ideal types, utopias and other useful functions. The function of comparison is less to stimulate experiment than to stimulate imagination" (Stretton: 1969: 245-247). The cross-system comparison also assisted the development of a conceptual framework for the study.

## **Philosophical Issues**

The philosophical issues that are currently affecting most developing countries are those related to equality of opportunity and access to basic education, linking the end products of schooling to the world of work, thus assisting the process of nation building. Such broad issues are applicable to island nations such as Mauritius and are illustrated in a few recent documents of the Ministry.

The first White Paper on Education (1984: 28) in Mauritius is considered a most significant document not only because it presented the major issues in education but because the Parliament agreed that it should be a blueprint for action. It presented the major concern of the government that :

Mauritius is littered with the remains of old programmes which have never been implemented; of good intentions which have never been translated into practice. Any serious plan should be concerned with how it is to be carried out, and with the machinery which will be needed to do so.

The White Paper on Education (1984: 9) also described the policy objectives of the government concerning the improvement of the quality of primary education that would ensure that the "educational system must be child-centred; it must be fair; it must be relevant; and it must be cost-effective."

That education was wasteful and irrelevant to the needs of the child was widely recognised in Mauritius. The UNESCO Report entitled "A Strategy for Cost-Effective Education and Training for Mauritius" (1984), based on a survey of education in the island, echoed the same views. The White Paper (1984: 6) further identified the major issues in education as: "... the impact of the examination on the majority of students, the poor quality of some schools, the low efficiency of the system due to drop-outs and repetition, and the lack of any clear relation between what goes on in the schools and the world of work."

At the inaugural speech in a Workshop on "Programme for Low-Achieving Primary Schools" held in April 1987, the Minister (1983) said that "If we are to create a fair and effective educational system, we must take whatever action is possible to raise standards in these schools; I personally will treat them as an area of high priority." A similar feeling was expressed by the then Minister in September 1979 at the MIE.

The declaration of intent of the Minister in September 1979 was perceived by the MIE to be concerned with the enhancement of the quality of education in the primary sector. Primary education on the island did not change in the last two hundred years or so of British colonial rule and it inevitably suffered from what Hughes (1982a) calls "sclerosis". It had to be brought in line with modern trends to meet the needs of children and the socioeconomic requirements of a fast developing island nation. Hughes (1967: 2), drawing from Beeby, explains that an "educational system aiming at quality has a distinctive sequence of development, passing through recognisable stages which might be abbreviated in duration but not avoided entirely."

## **Questions for Research**

The approach in this study was to follow such a "sequence of development" by addressing questions in three interconnected areas: "The Minister's statement of intention" that covered the crucial events that transpired from January 1979 to the Minister's declaration of intent in September 1979 to the submission of UNDP Project Proposal in June 1980 to the Minister (1979); "the government's strategies in the Primary Schooling Reform" covers the crucial events that transpired between June 1980 until the signing of the Project Document between the government and the UNDP in October 1983, that confirmed the intention of the UNDP to assist the Primary Schooling Reform; and "the government's decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform" covers the crucial events that transpired between October 1983 and April 1986 when the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) resigned. The study of the Minister's (1979) statement of intention is based on two premises. The first is that his statement was conditioned by the environmental contexts. The second is that subsequent decisions of the Minister which emerged from the statement were also influenced by the society around him.

The study of the Minister's (1979) statement of intention, the government's strategies and its other decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform suggested the need for research questions. These served as a guide to the review of literature, the formulation of a conceptual framework and the choice of methodology.

There were four key questions and fourteen sub-questions as follows:

### **Key Question**

1. What were the factors that directly or indirectly conditioned the Minister's (1979) announcement to proceed with the Primary Schooling Reform in September 1979?



### **Sub-questions**

- 1.1 How easily manageable was the Minister's (1979) announcement in the environmental contexts within which it was made?
- 1.2 What were the specific issues the announcement was addressing at that time?
- 1.3 How did key actors like the Director of the MIE and the vested interests respond to this announcement?
- 1.4 What were the factors that were perceived to have a greater influence on the Minister's (1979) thinking at one particular time than at another?

### **Key Question**

2. What were the strategies established by the Minister (1979) to further shape the announcement?

### **Sub-questions**

- 2.1 How far were those strategies a response to the environmental contexts?
- 2.2 How were those strategies perceived by the key actors like the Director of the MIE and the senior officials of the Ministry?
- 2.3 How far were the Minister's (1979) decisions compatible with the emerging issues at different times?
- 2.4 How were those issues perceived by different key actors at different times?

### **Key Question**

3. To what extent were the Minister's (1983) decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform influenced by the environmental conditions?

### **Sub-questions**

- 3.1 How did the Minister (1983) perceive the changes in the management structures for the Primary Schooling Reform?
- 3.2 How did the characteristics of these structures affect the smooth running of the reform?

- 3.3 What were the influences that conditioned the Minister's (1983) behaviour in so far as the new management structures were concerned?

**Key Question**

4. To what extent did the environmental conditions influence the Minister's (1983) decisions?

**Sub-questions**

- 4.1 What were the most predominant influences on the Minister (1979)?
- 4.2 How were those influences perceived by those other than the Minister (1983)?
- 4.3 How far were the senior officials influenced by the Minister's (1983) behaviour?

**Definition of Terms**

It is necessary to define certain terms owing to the varied connotations that have been adopted in developed and in developing countries such as island nations. Other terms that require clarification are explained as and when they appear in the study.

**Policy** is defined "as a course of purposive action followed in dealing with a problem or matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. We understand this definition to embrace both what actually is intended and what occurs as a result of the intention" (Harman, 1983: 97).

**Policy statement** is a presentation in considered words that officially contributes to the context within which a sequence of decisions will be made (Friend, 1975: 1).

**Policy process** is a sequence of complex analytical activities which culminate in decisions (Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 3) and which produces effects called "policies" (Lindblom, 1968: 3-4).

**Policy implementation** consists of translating and adapting the official statements into plans and programmes of action, taking into consideration the political,

sociological and geographical factors with a view to achieving specific goals (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980; McLaughlin, 1975; Rein and Rabinovitz, 1978; Bardach, 1977; Radin, 1977).

**Policy outcomes** are the end-products of policy implementation and represent the impact on real social situations (Dror, 1968: 3).

**Culture** is the pattern of life that encompasses the whole social activity of a nation, people or group within political, economic, educational and social structures (Brock and Tulasiewicz, 1985: 3).

A **model** is a simplified representation of the interrelationships of some aspects of the real world (Dye, 1972; Greenberger et al., 1976: 49).

**Environment** refers to the technological, legal, political, economic, demographic, ecological and cultural conditions that form the backdrop for policy-making and policy implementation (Hall, 1972: 298-304; Campbell and Mazzoni, 1976: 1).

**Developing countries** or the Third World are those nations that are characterised by low GNP, high level of unemployment, high population growth, poverty, malnutrition, ignorance and slow progress in the socioeconomic domain (Curle, 1963: 13).

**Elite** refers to " . . . small group of people . . . proximate to the process of deciding what is to be public policy at any point of time" (Hofferbert, 1974: 226). The group includes the officials who are office-holders as well as the non-officials who are outside the Ministry.

**Parastatal bodies** refers to the educational institutions like the Mauritius Institute of Education, that have been created by Acts of Parliament and which function under the aegis of the Ministry.

**Island nations** refers to the small insular states such as those in the three regional clusters of islands, namely, the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific which have certain commonalities among them. For

instance, these have a low standard of living, depend generally on agriculture and are multi-cultural; they are characterised by colonial imperialism during their course of history, but which today are mostly politically independent although economically dependent on the ex-colonial powers and other advanced countries.

## **Significance of the Study**

### **Significance for Mauritius**

The researcher is an educational administrator occupying the post of Principal Education Officer at the Ministry of Education of Mauritius. He has served as an adviser to three different Ministers of Education and has been closely associated with policy-making and policy implementation during that time.

Following extensive meetings that the researcher had in Mauritius with a wide cross-section of the Mauritius population, from education and outside education, it became evident that the study will be of value since it was the first time that a senior officer was involved in research that was directly related to his job. It is worth noting that his meetings with all those concerned with education helped to sensitize them to the needs for research which may improve policy practice not only at the Ministry of Education but also in other Ministries. The discussions provided very wide-ranging perspectives on the community and revealed that the outcomes of this research could be useful in the understanding of the interrelationships between the policy-making elite and the environmental contexts since the research was:

1. directly related to the work that the researcher is presently engaged in at the Ministry i.e , in policy-making and policy implementation;
2. conducted with the utmost regard to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Ministry of Education through the development of a model that will illuminate the policy process; and

3. based on a rigorous investigation of policy-making and policy implementation within a wider context covering both the developing and developed countries, especially in island nations.

Educational policies and practices exercise a major influence on Mauritius society in general and on each and every ethno-religious group. In turn, the society exerts influences that shape the ideas of the policy-making elite. It is therefore self-evidently worthwhile to search for an understanding of education as a public policy domain through a rigorous examination of models of policies and practices that illustrate the relevant circumstances that have immediate policy consequences. The Primary Schooling Reform, which is regarded as a unique venture in the history of education in Mauritius, identifies the interests and the key actors and its reconstruction presents the various attitudes and actions as they affect the outcome. The final outcome is the specification of an appropriate model that could explain the Mauritius situation more effectively by placing the policy-maker in the environmental contexts.

The final development of a model and the information gathered in the case study are likely to have an impact on policy-makers and practitioners, especially as the present research is relevant to issues which concern politicians and administrators. In particular, these people may be sensitized:

through information and persuading those with responsibility for action . . . It is sound advice to keep your research perspective but also to remember the genuine concerns of others if you want to make an impact and to receive continuing support and resources (Nisbet, 1985: 10-11).

The model which has resulted from the study may be useful in reaching decisions about how policies ought to be made and also how policies made out of ignorance are wrong. The belief is that, ultimately, research will foster a closer relationship between the policy-makers and policy implementers through a better understanding of the "slip between . . . accomplishment, legislation and execution, promise and performance" (Moore and Allison, 1978: 150). Similarly, Nisbet (1985:

13) perceived that the research enterprise works best when it works "interactively" rather than in a "linear" fashion and cited Husen and Kogan who stated that "it is the interaction between researchers and practitioners that is seen as the means where new studies are initiated."

Finally, in the context of Mauritius, the research may provide some insights into the prevailing problems that are besetting policy-makers and implementers. There is a belief that solutions to problems may be found and that the outcomes of this research may have an impact on approaches to policy, not only in the Ministry of Education but also in other Ministries. The impact of this research may also lead to the identification of weaknesses in the various Ministerial portfolios which, after remediation, may lead to greater management efficiency and effectiveness.

In summary, this study was intended to bring about a better understanding of the policy domain in Mauritius by highlighting how the actions of the policy-maker are shaped by the contexts. It may influence policy-makers indirectly since, from a long term point of view, "a gradual accumulation of research results . . . can lead to serious and far-reaching changes in the way people and governments address their problems" (Weiss cited by Nisbet, 1985: 10).

### **Significance for Other Developing Countries**

Educational development is still greatly influenced by past colonial experience. The three regional clusters comprising the island states of the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, as well as Africa and a large section of Asia and South America, are still dominated by borrowed systems of education, with little change in approaches to policy. Nevertheless, education to a very great extent decides the children's future life-options and the manpower needs of poor nations. Sound educational policies are therefore required to develop the appropriate manpower needed by the respective countries.

It is intended that the findings of this study will contribute to an understanding of the policy process in developing countries, especially in small island states like Mauritius, taking into consideration their respective environments. To a certain extent, these findings will support the need for monitoring and stock-taking of projects and programmes to ensure that the objectives put forward by different governments are not simply rhetoric but are seen to be fulfilled, thus bringing greater happiness to the community.

### **Significance for the Development of Theory**

In his exploration of research utilisation in a historical perspective, Mitchell (1985: 21) cited Ukeles (1977) finding that research in policy had moved from mere "propositions to reality, from a 'fringe' idea to a central place in official public administration thinking. . . . The theoretical roots are primarily intellectual and involve the development of new ideas . . . " In a similar line of thinking, Harman (1983: 122) cited Wirt's belief that research in policy should " . . . be designed not merely to describe a process but to generate or test theory." In the same passage, Harman further argued that what was required " . . . is a comprehensive theory which can explain how educational policy is handled in different units of analysis, in different social contexts, and in different times."

Nisbet and Broadfoot (1980: 20-21) identified three levels of impact of a model in further development of theories:

1. immediate and direct impact: this was perceived to be rare except when topics were non-controversial and values were not challenged;
2. intermediate impact: this occurred with evaluation and developmental work which was seldom published; and
3. long term indirect impact: this "is increasingly recognised in the literature as the most important and far-reaching . . . (and) influences the climate of opinion."

It is intended that the model developed in this study will make a contribution to the development of theory on policy processes at the Third World level, especially in small developing countries, in the spirit of this view of Nisbet and Broadfoot. It may generate further studies and research, and subsequently lead to the development of new models or refinement of existing models that will advance knowledge and improve the quality of policy-making and policy implementation.

The potential of theory as a tool for the understanding of comparative policy-making and policy implementation in this study was supported by Merritt and Coombs (1977: 252). They asserted that:

1. the explanation that something happened in a system needed the application of a theory or model;
2. the development and testing of a theory required explicit comparison;
3. a systematic cross-system helped to develop the theories we needed; and
4. without theories based on systematic cross-system comparisons, we would not be able to explain much of anything, even within a single system.

The model that emerges from this study may prove useful after refinement and testing in different case studies and varied contexts. It may also be useful as an organisational framework for planning, financing, implementing and evaluating national and international strategies for educational development.

The most practical and economical theory or model is the one that describes interrelationships, with implications for many different problems (Gallagher and Sanders, 1976: 1 - 2). The essence was to relate problems and findings to the theoretical framework. Ruin (1976: 107) considered that "all knowledge must relate to a framework of interpretation, because only thus does any information make sense." Nisbet and Broadfoot (1980: 52) supported the view that research which has the most influence



... has been the academic work which generated new concepts or new interpretations or reformulated problems ... (and) reveal the essential ambiguity, complexity and contradiction of the world around us. The researcher's task is not to decide but to expose the range of phenomena so that the democratic system can make its choice of which perception it wants to follow.

It is intended that the model identified in this study be useful in understanding the policy domain, the interrelationships between policy and its contexts, and its implications for various problems that emerge as a result. In summary, it will highlight how the actions of the policy-making elite occur and the influences that condition their ideas.

## **Delimitations and Limitations**

### **Delimitations**

The case study covered the period between the publication of "The Future in our Hands" in January 1979 and the resignation of the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre in April 1986, and involved three Ministers at three different times as indicated earlier in this chapter.

The case study on the Primary Schooling Reform was based at the Ministry where the researcher was an on-the-spot analyst surveying the events from a pedestal position in a manner explained by Hofferbert (1974: 93), namely, where he could:

take up a central observation post and catalog the passing traffic at a selected institutional junction ... The traffic one observes, nonetheless, is a function of both a keen eyesight and of the junction at which one happens to be located.

The information was gathered from the documents of the Ministry and from interviews and was analysed on the basis of the conceptual framework. Finally, a model that explains the Mauritius situation emerged.

The study focused on the specific events that occurred before the declaration of the intent of the Minister in September 1979, and those that happened afterwards. The objective was not only to describe what the aims and outcomes of the declaration of the Minister (1979) were but to examine the events in such a way as to provide an

illumination of the manner in which specific processes occurred as a response to the societal needs. Only issues that were of relevance to the understanding of why certain things happened were selected.

### **Limitations**

The model that has emerged in this study has been derived from events in Mauritius. Its generalisability to other developing countries, especially to other small island states, is limited to the extent there are commonalities in terms of history, geography and the socio-technological environment. Conditions vary from country to country in the manner described in Chapter 3.

The information gathered at the Ministry of Education was mainly derived from the Ministry's documents and interviews. The following limitations are evident:

1. files were examined in a chronological order and there is evidence to suggest that there were certain major and minor decisions taken without being recorded on files; many non-decisions that were crucial to the Primary Schooling Reform were also not minuted in the Ministry's files;
2. highly controversial and sensitive issues and confidential matters debated in Cabinet or in Ministerial and Select Committees set up by Parliament but of relevance to the study could not be quoted except in a manner that would not be prejudicial to the Ministry;
3. access to some Ministerial files and confidential documents dealing with the Primary Schooling Reform in Ministries other than education was restricted; and
4. all information gathered from the Ministry's documents was subject to the Ministry's scrutiny before being incorporated in the thesis.

Another limitation of the study arises from the selection of one case for study. This case related to one of a large number of decisions taken by the Minister. This case study is therefore not necessarily representative of all case studies in the Ministry

although it could provide a profound insight into the policy domain and could be used as a springboard for others.

It can be safely be said that the research unravelled by and large who the key actors were, and what their probable behaviours were. To the extent that there may have been some influences exerted on the elite, especially on the Minister, from elsewhere, and which have not been revealed despite a thorough search, this would be considered a limitation of the study.

## **Organisations of Chapters**

This thesis contains eight chapters which are organised as follows:

**Chapter 1** contained the purpose of the study, context, philosophical issues, questions for research, definition of terms, a statement on the significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and organisation of chapters.

**Chapter 2** contains a more detailed definition of terms, a review of models in the policy domain, largely derived in developed countries, and an analysis of these models.

**Chapter 3** contains a review of the current issues in developing countries, especially island nations, and offers a framework for understanding environments insofar as they affect the policy domain in such countries.

**Chapter 4** contains the conceptual framework for the study and outlines the research design and methodology.

**Chapter 5** presents the Minister's (1979) statement of intention on the Primary Schooling Reform under two headings: Section 1 covers the major events from January 1979 to the submission of the Project Proposal by the UNDP to the Minister in June 1980; Section 2 presents an analysis of the information in terms of the elements of the conceptual framework.

**Chapter 6** presents the government's strategies in the Primary Schooling Reform under two headings: Section 1 covers the major events that transpired between

December 1979 until the signing of the UNDP Project Document in October 1983 between the government and the UNDP that confirmed the intention of the UNDP to assist the reform; Section 2 presents an analysis of the information in accordance with the elements of the conceptual framework

**Chapter 7** presents the government's decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform under two headings: Section 1 covers the major events that transpired from the signing of the UNDP Project Document in October 1983 between the government and the UNDP until the resignation of the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre in April 1986; Section 2 presents an analysis of the information in accordance with the elements of the conceptual framework.

**Chapter 8** contains a summary of the thesis under the following headings: the purpose, questions for research, the design of the conceptual framework and the methodology, the findings organised according to the research questions, a synthesis of elite behaviour in education policy in Mauritius, recommendations for theory development, recommendations for research in future, and recommendations for Mauritius and developing countries.

## **Chapter 2**

## **Review of models in the policy domain**

Many independent developing countries that were ex-colonies of Britain and France, in particular, continue to maintain the "borrowed" bureaucratic machinery for making and implementing policy in education. Technological, economic and social changes have brought an increasing number of problems and issues into the lap of government. These have produced a mismatch between the demands placed upon government by the pressures from society and its ability to respond effectively to these demands. In modern democracies, the political system attempts to transform these pressures from society into public policies and programmes that respond to their needs and aspirations.

This chapter explores in more detail some key concepts defined in Chapter 1. These are model, policy and policy implementation. Then follows a review of literature on policy models. This chapter is intended to throw more light on the concepts and use of different models in policy domains that would enhance the understanding of the policy arena in developing countries in general and, especially, in Mauritius.

### **Key Concepts**

#### **Model**

According to various dictionaries, a model is "a small replica of an existing object," or "a standard of excellence," or "a particular style or design," or "a description or analogy used to help visualise something (such as an atom) that cannot be directly observed." A deeper insight into the nature of models is presented by Dye (1972: 21) who defined a model as a "simplified representation of some aspects of the real world. It may be an actual physical representation . . . or it may be a diagram or a flow chart."

Turner et al. (1972: 35) provide an even more specific view of what a model is and the purposes it can serve:

Any conceptual analogue, generally of a physical or mathematical nature, which is used to suggest empirical research; that is to say, once a particular model has been selected the researcher is not concerned at all about modifying the model itself on the basis of data obtained by means of it; this insensitivity to data is a major difference between the model and other forms of theory.

A further explanation of a model that is crucial to the understanding of policy-making and policy implementation is provided by two interrelated frameworks: the verbal and the mental conceptions. Greenberger et al. (1976: 56) illustrate the verbal and mental conceptions in Figure 2.1

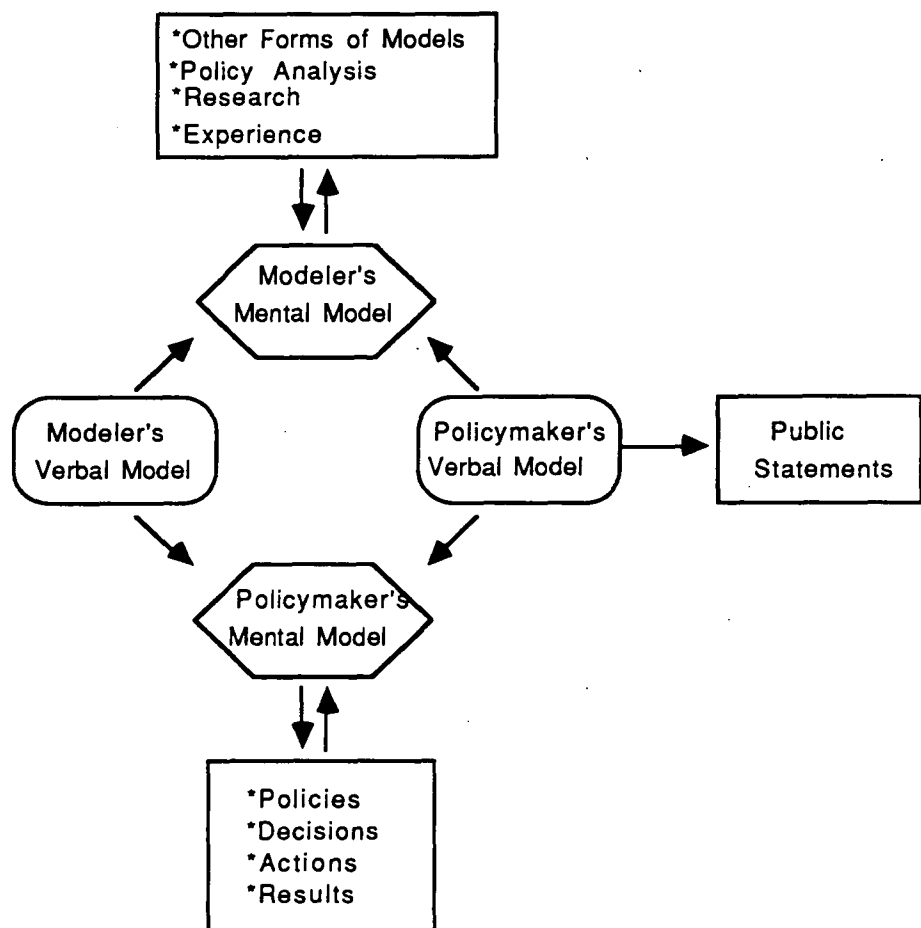


Fig 2.1 Mental Models and Verbal Models in the Policy Process

The verbal conception relates to the use of a formal language such as English or French to influence the policy-maker's mental conception. The mental conception is arrived at through the study of other models, policy analysis, research and personal experience. The policy-maker's mental perception is framed by views on policies, decisions, actions and results. The mental conception is thus communicated verbally to the policy-maker who responds by incorporating it with his or her conception. Thereafter, the policy-maker makes a verbal public policy statement which becomes the policy and at the same time gives feedback to the modeller's mental conception in case adjustments have to be made. Thus by "impinging upon the mental model (conception) of the policy-maker, verbal models (conceptions) become the avenue for influencing decisions" (Greenberger et al., 1976: 52). This study addresses (among other matters) the mental and verbal models of the policy-making elite.

It is argued that any public statement made by the politician by virtue of position as an elected representative of the people is assumed to be based on the various influences that condition both mental and verbal models. A mental model, in particular, is considered crucial since it is based on policies, decisions, actions and results as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Another useful approach to the understanding of the models of policy-making and policy implementation is to look at a series of models reflecting different viewpoints. Such an approach is called "multimodelling" which is useful in three ways:

1. it incorporates a variety of assumptions and theories;
2. it may give rise to similar conclusions despite dissimilar approaches and assumptions and will support policy action; and
3. it provides the policy-maker with a range of assumptions and points of view even if the conclusions are not similar (Greenberger et al., 1976: 69).

Dye (1972) and Greenberger et al. (1976) support the use of models in different administrative tasks. Models are not competitive but rather complementary. Nevertheless, there would be a case for "counter-modelling" or "adversary modelling" which is instrumental in identifying "the substantive points of difference between antagonists and thereby redirecting political debate from apparent to real areas of disagreement" (Greenberger et al., 1976: 334).

Models may thus become troublesome politically, particularly when the issues under consideration are complex and marked by a high degree of uncertainty. What is required in a volatile and delicate political setting is "compromise, conciliation and mediation rather than strong stands and elaborate justifications" (Greenberger et al., 1976: 334).

Dye (1972: 43 - 44), on the other hand, sees that models may serve a useful purpose only if they are simple and clear and if they depict the significant features of reality. Good models should provide few grounds for disagreement and should provide a basis for enquiry and research. Models should be flexible enough to adapt themselves to conflict management, permitting a "cooling off" period in turbulent situations. Greenberger et al. (1976: 329) see models as instruments for enlightening decision-makers. This can happen only if they are presented at an opportune time and communicated in terms the policy-maker can understand. Finally, models of educational policy-making and policy implementation help in the understanding of who makes policy and the interrelationship between policy and outcomes. Such a view is echoed by Harman (1980: 69) who perceives that, although:

no single model accounts for more than one facet of the totality of the situation they should all be thought of partly as different ways of thinking about different kinds of policy activities, and partly as tools that can be used in combination.

Models are therefore simplified representations of the interrelationships of some aspects of the real world (Dye, 1972; Greenberger et al., 1976). It is unlikely



that a single model will capture all the facets of the reality being represented. A better model may be achieved by selecting the elements within a series of models that reflect different viewpoints and incorporating them within a single model.

Models are intended to serve three purposes in this study:

1. to enhance an understanding of the policy arena generally in island nations and, specifically, in Mauritius;
2. to help build up a conceptual framework which "... is a set of concepts which serves to focus the investigation, providing a guide to the formulation of sub-problems and research design as well as to the organisation and analysis of findings" (Hocking and Caldwell, 1990); and
3. to help shape methodology and sharpen the research design.

It is important that a framework should be flexible enough "... not (to) limit the introduction of new elements which might emerge in the course of data collection, nor constrain the interpretation of the significance of, or relationships between, the various elements" (Hocking and Caldwell, 1990). This caution was observed throughout, with the result that a new element was added to the conceptual framework in the final chapter, following analysis and findings.

## **Policy**

The term "policy" is highly elusive. It is often used loosely and there is no common agreement on its definition. Apthorpe (1984: 128) argues that many policy-makers "equate policy with just the prescribing of policy" (and that) "policy-stating is part of the art of public policy which most models of policy-making do not address." He further perceives that key words may be "routinised" or "ossified" through repetition and in so doing lose their precise connotations. Similarly, Heclo (1972: 84) perceives that "Policy is not ... a self evident term." Another argument is that of Cunningham (cited in Ham and Hill, 1986: 11) that "Policy is rather like the elephant - you recognise it when you see it but cannot easily define it."

There are also competing definitions of policy which may range from broad and simple statements like "conscious . . . constructive responses to problems" (Mitchell, 1985: 33), or "what governments do" (Dye, 1972), or "a proposed course of action . . . to reach a goal (Freidrick, 1963), or "a species in decision-making" (Dror, 1971), or "a frame of reference for decision-making" (Mosychuck and Blowers, 1978) to complete characteristics and "regimes of practices" (Foucault cited in Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 175).

Another way of looking at policy is in terms of stable commitments and important resources. Policy is "a committed structure of important resources" (Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 164). The functionalist-structuralist definition of policy is primarily "a vehicle for allocating power to individuals or groups with a legitimate right to exercise (and conversely), limiting the power of those whose interests are less legitimate" (Mitchell, 1985: 31).

Self (1983: 3) argues that the policy domain is essentially a political affair and reflects the pressures of established interests and bureaucratic responses. Like Taylor (1973) and Harman (1985), he perceives that:

Demands are articulated through interest and cause groups, synthesized or incorporated in the often vague programmes of political parties, converted into laws and expressed by political leaders as public policies. Further socio-technological changes, economic fluctuations and financial commitments may also have a deep impact on policy-making.

Policy is also perceived to occur at different levels, even at the level of the school within an educational system. This view is supported by Caldwell (1982: 97) who cited Stringham's definition of policy as "a major guideline for future action . . . generalised, philosophically based, . . . (implying) an intention and pattern for taking action." Wildavsky (1979: 387) views policy as a process and a product thus: "It is used to refer to a process of decision-making and also to the product of that process." A different conception is that of Easton (1953: 130): "... a policy (is) ... a web of decisions and actions that allocate values."

For purposes of this study, policy is defined in the terms offered by Harman, cited by Williams (1982: 66), whereby: "Policy can be viewed basically as a course of action, or inaction, towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired end. It embraces both what is actually intended and what occurs as a result of intention."

### **Policy Implementation**

Randell (1982: 135) acknowledges that "the formal study of the implementation of public policies is still a relatively new area of research." A view held by Hargrove (1975) was the recognition that implementation was "the missing link" in the study of social policy. There is, however, still no agreement on the term "policy implementation" by students and practitioners of government because of the interdependency of the terms "policy" and "implementation". The causal link that exists between policy-making and policy implementation makes it implicit that policy includes its transformation into operational terms as well as sustained efforts to achieve the changes mandated by policy. This view is supported by Apthorpe (1984: 127) who asserts that: "there is nothing neutral or innocent about policy and discourse about policy. How could it be when its *raison d'être* is that it should be applied, put into practice?"

Following Hargrove's (1975) perspective, Apthorpe (1984) conceives that policy implementation is first shaped by political consensus followed by planning and programming in which politicians, bureaucrats and lobbyists bargain to have control over the direction of the programme. This implies, according to Hargrove (1975: 2), that "what happens in the implementation phase has already been shaped by the theories about cause and effect implicit in policy." In the same line of thinking, Appleby (1962: 19) argues that executives do not sit at two different desks, "treating policy at one and administration at the other." This implies that implementation is implicit in policy formulation. Another view is held by Clay and Schaffer (1984: 3) who believe that between intention and outcome, there are gaps or "escape hatches"

that represent excuses and exits due to irrational behaviours, lack of political will and shortages of resources. Such a view is also supported by DiNitto and Dye (1983: 232 - 233) who further perceive that policy implementation includes all those activities that are designed after a "law" is passed. According to them, such activities include:

1. creating, organising, staffing or assigning new responsibilities;
2. issuing and entering directives, rules, regulations, and guidelines to translate policies into specific courses of action; and
3. directing and coordinating personnel and expenditures towards the achievement of policy objectives.

In summary, the definition of policy by Harman (1983: 97) cited earlier in Chapter 1 is accepted for the study, namely:

... as a course of purposive action followed in dealing with a problem or matter of concern and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. We understand this definition to embrace both what actually is intended and what occurs as a result of the intention.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE IN THE POLICY DOMAIN**

A review of literature dealing with the policy domain was carried out with the aim of identifying models, leading ultimately to the selection of one model, or a part of a model, or models in combination that could be used in the development of a conceptual framework in Chapter 4. Although the mind of the researcher was stretched as far back as the 18th Century to Rousseau's "Social Contract", the 1951 publication of Lerner and Lasswell's "Policy Sciences," and the 1980 publication of Stuart Nagel's "Handbook of Policy Sciences", it was mostly the recent works that have been selected and explored because these contained elements that were posited to be of general applicability to developing countries and specifically to Mauritius. Models of policy in developing and developed countries were reviewed and the dearth of such models was clearly apparent in developing countries as compared with their abundance

in developed countries. It was therefore judged reasonable and convenient to deal with the models of developed countries first in this chapter and those of developing countries in the following chapter. In all, fourteen models of policy were identified. These models were as follows: the rational model, "disjointed incrementalism", political power game, bargaining, politics, interaction, systems model, mutual adaptation, circular process, evolutionary, macro-micro process, interaction: Iannaccone Typology, garbage can, and model for comparative study of policy formation. Each of these is now examined in turn. An analysis follows.

### **The Rational Model**

The model that dominated the policy arena for a long time was the rational model. This classical view of organisational theory as presented by the centre-periphery model (Weber, 1947) or the linear commonsense model of policy (Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 3; Rose, 1975: 63), attempts to provide a broad framework for the understanding of the linkages between policy-making and policy implementation. The commonsense model represents public policy as a dichotomous linear process of two distinct sequential phases as shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 represents the traditional model of policy whereby the process is initiated with a "decision" or a series of activities leading to a decision. This "decision" constitutes "policy". Then there is a break. On the other side of the divide is "policy implementation". The policy-policy implementation dichotomy is considered by Clay and Schaffer (1984: 5) to be the common and rational way that most governments ought to perceive policy-making and policy implementation though in actual fact it is not so. Simon (1945: 241) recognised the "practical limits to human rationality" and the various ways in which actual behaviour departs from theory and, in his later works, Simon (1957: xxiv) elaborates the concept of "bounded rationality" that examines decision-making in practice, a similar thought that is also echoed in

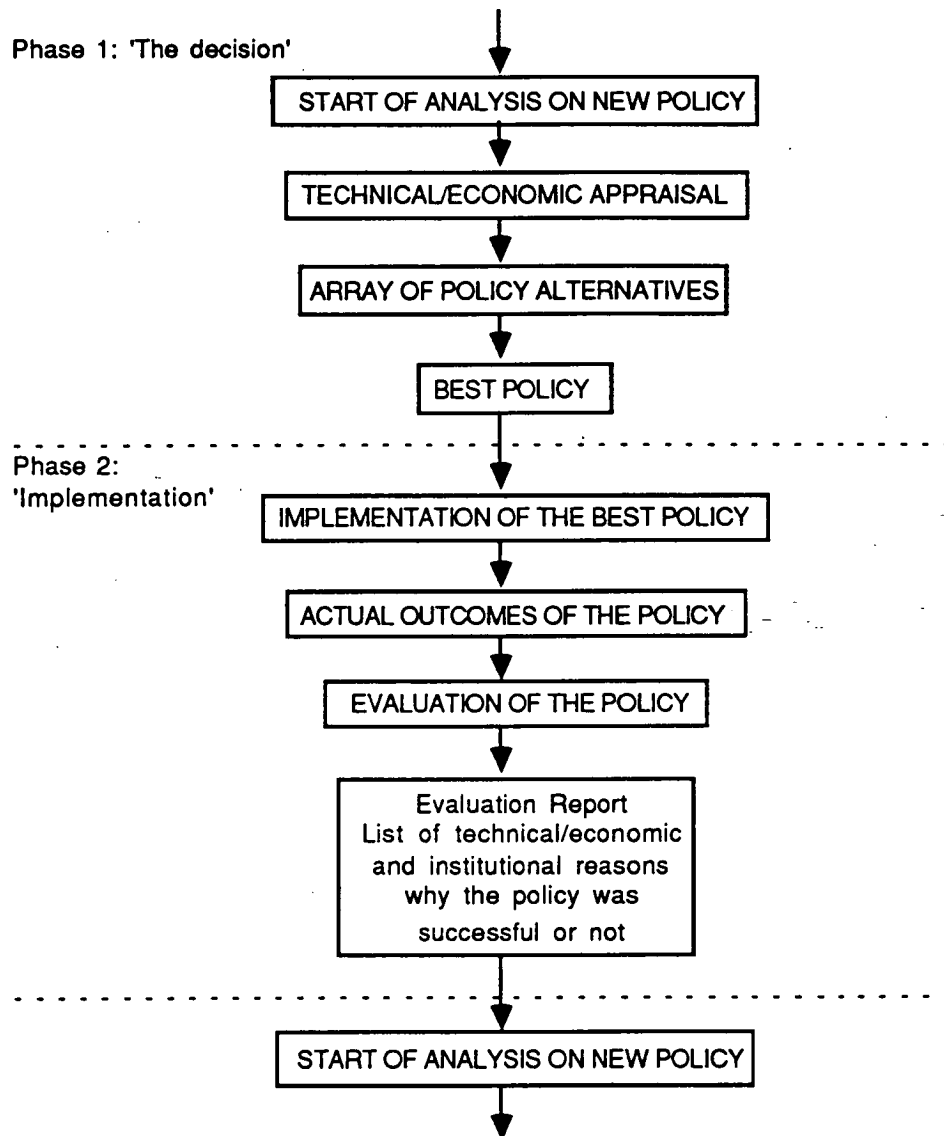


Figure 2.2. A Representation of the Linear (Commonsense) Model: "the policy cycle"

Source: Clay and Schaffer (1984: 4)

Lindblom's "incrementalism" (1959). Policy-making is therefore considered to be highly complex and to get an insight into it, it may be necessary to examine who actually makes policy. Further it is only when policy is worked out in practice at the "street" level that the meaning of implementation can be known (Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977; Lipsky, 1980).

In recent times more stress has been laid on policy implementation which is considered to be dependent on four important variables: political factors which relate to conflicts in values and norms; economic factors which relate to the resource allocations and firm commitments; sociological factors which relate to the bureaucratic and political climate; and geographical factors which relate to territorial jurisdiction (Bunker cited in Kandell, 1982: 136). Policy-makers have the tendency not to be explicit about goals (Dror, 1971). The conflicting and vague policy statements of most policy objectives provide "escape routes" or "hiving off" or "escape hatches" (Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 192) to policy-makers and implementers. Schaffer treats policy as "verbal, voluntaristic and decisional"; "myth of decisionality"; "utterances"; "inconsistency"; "irrational"; "escape routes". There is always room for manoeuvre, and there are always other policies (Schaffer, 1985). It is expected that the interrelationship between policy-making and policy implementation "can provide direct, more useful, and more readily generalised advice to policy-makers" (Berman, 1978: 158) just as the "interstices" between politics and administration could be more useful in the understanding of policy (Self, 1983: 3).

The dichotomous rational model seems to suggest that planners who take decisions think that implementation is a problem for somebody else. This is misleading for policy implementation is implicit in policy (Appleby, 1962). This model does not also illustrate the influences of the environmental contexts on the policy-makers.

The commonsense model is a useful approach, particularly where decisions are made by a single person or unit and a useful tool for research (Harman, 1980: 54 -

75). However it fails to consider the political aspects of policy and is unhelpful as a version of what actually happens. It fails to consider alternatives and better policies.

### **"Disjointed Incrementalism"**

The concept of "disjointed incrementalism" is concerned with the decision-maker who keeps on returning to problems through a "mutual adjustment" which is concerned with negotiation and bargaining. Such an adjustment is characterised by a "serial" and "sequential" process that suits the political arena. Lindblom (1959) argues that the incrementalist model is "disjointed" because the policy that is made and the problem which it is addressing are analysed at different points without apparent coordination between them. It is simply, as he says, "muddling through" to attain one's ends.

Lindblom views policy-making as a "fragmented activity", a serial and sequential process to suit political feasibility", and "decision-making through small or incremental moves on particular problems rather than through a comprehensive reform programme"; "the science of muddling through" or "partisan mutual adjustment". Since solutions have to be devised to solve problems related to conflicting interests, they are best achieved through a piecemeal activity. The chances of success for policies which differ markedly from the existing ones are rather slim. On the other hand, policies which differ marginally have a better chance of success.

This model provides an accurate view of the real world where bureaucrats in an established hierarchy may consider policy formulation in a piecemeal fashion since all the issues may not concern a single officer. The concept of Lindblom's "partisan mutual adjustment" adds strength to the piecemeal approach. This model, however, suffers from two weaknesses:

1. It fails to account for basic changes in policy;
2. New policies based on the previous ones may go wrong if the latter are misdirected.

Etzioni corrects the deficiencies in Lindblom's model by proposing a:



"mixed scanning model" whereby the policy maker works his way based on fundamental and sound principles where he is not likely to go wrong. This model "combines the strengths of the incremental and rational models . . . it distinguishes between fundamental decisions and incremental decisions. With fundamental decisions, . . . the policy-maker deliberately scans alternatives (Harman, 1980: 60).

Policy-makers usually follow the established procedures and directions. This is the safest way to proceed as it will lead to fewer or no criticisms at all. Public policy as such does not develop in leaps and bounds, but by the making of marginal changes in the already existing programmes. The mode of decision-making will therefore be an "incremental" one which will reduce the policy-maker's demand for the services of researchers and analysts. Researchers and policy-makers usually have contradictory interests as they belong to different "sub-cultures" (Greenberger et al., 1976) and any interrelationship between the two requires "mutual adjustment" (Lindblom, 1965). Further, the policy-maker's questions and the researcher's answers may result in a by-product which may not serve the purpose of the policy-maker at that particular point or may even be "unreadable" (Bienayme, 1984: 126).

Policy research seldom emerges as a distinct function to be performed by distinct specialists because, in incremental systems, policy-making itself serves the purpose of policy research. The decision-maker behaves like an experimenter who makes limited and tentative adjustments in policy so that he can observe their effects and refine hypotheses about the likely consequences of future adjustments (Greenberger et al., 1976).

The past experience of the policy-maker, with extensive reliance on precedence, form the basis for predicting the consequences of the proposed marginal changes. A wrong projection of a small policy alteration does not normally bring about far-reaching consequences (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963). However, in the case of big and non-incremental decisions required to meet national crises, the policy-maker has to rely not only on experience and that of advisers but also that of researchers.

The greater the costs and risks or uncertainty, and the more significant the changes in method and goals involved, the more intense is the search for information. But the stronger too is the weight of established policy and vested interests. Decisions

involving many people, much money, great uncertainty or vast risks, and major innovations evoke action and advice from every specialised unit at every level of the hierarchy, thereby increasing the dangers of overload, distortion, or blockage of communication and of paralysing delays (Wilensky, 1967).

Incrementalism provides an accurate view of the real world only in cases where politicians and administrators, in an established hierarchy, follow the procedures and directions to bring about marginal or "incremental" changes where: "the decision-maker behaves like an experimenter who makes limited and tentative adjustments in policy so that he can observe their effects and refine hypotheses about the likely consequences of future adjustments" (Greenberger et al., 1976: 39).

Lindblom (1968: 26) further perceives the virtue of this model as one that can be used as a "tactic of bottleneck breaking to simplify complex problems . . . what is feasible politically is policy only incrementally or marginally, different from existing policies" (Wilensky, 1967).

### **Political Power Game**

The "political power game" model was developed by David Truman who laid emphasis on the "multiplicity of competing groups" (Harman, 1980). Such demands vary according to the nature and status of the group and the type of government interacting with it.

The political-power scenario is useful in the understanding of education policy-making especially in areas where there are conflicts. But these theories view policy simply as a product of conflict and neglect the element of consensus, so much so that politicians and administrators are considered no more than "adjudicators" (Harman, 1980) between rival groups. In such a scenario, it is believed that fundamental conflicts in society insofar as values are concerned are resolved through the exercise of power. The power of governance is considered to be essential when other means of deciding conflicts are unavailable. Thus a policy-implementation

scenario that follows from this view is that one party, that of the government , imposes its policy preferences on the other, and the other has no choice but to comply.

The political-power scenario is useful in cases where there are too many divergences and differences particularly in terms of fundamental values, and attitudes. Such power brings down the scope for negotiations to possibly a few groups or to a monolithic group. Outside allies and intervention groups in such cases wane off.

This model fails to consider the role of individuals, organisational factors and the environmental conditions. It neglects the elements of consensus and integration and considers political power as the only criterion for determining policies.

### **Bargaining**

This theory views the emergence of politics merely as the results of conflicts, confusion and compromise of officials with diverse interests and unequal influence. It is therefore necessary to identify the games and the players as they are related to the bargaining procedures.

Peterson has applied this theory to city education politics and policy-making through the identification of two patterns of bargaining:

1. The pluralist bargaining where the participants (players) endeavour to have an interest in maximising electoral or organisational advantage with an interest in reaching consensus. Such interests are normally narrow and deal with limited issues.
2. The ideological bargaining where the participants are involved in wider conflicts such as those related to race, class, faction or political regime; the participants are ideologically committed to these factors.

The bargaining model has a place in education in view of the controversy underlying the policy-making process. Peterson's approach provides a useful framework for the analysis of conflicts within education. However, this theory has a limited application since it applies mostly to situations where conflicts are dominant.

Running on parallel lines with Peterson's model is Elmore's model (1978) in which implementation is basically a "bargaining process" and a game where "bargaining, manoeuvring and persuasion" are applied to gain control over resources (Elmore, 1978; Bardach, 1977; Ingram, 1977).

While Peterson's model is built on political manoeuvring leading to policy formulation, Elmore's model views implementation as a political bargaining process. Both models work only when the participants with conflicting objectives have a common interest in coming together through political consensus.

### **Politics**

Lowi (1970) assumes that "policies determine politics" (Harman, 1980: 62) and that different kinds of policies are associated with distinctive political processes. His analysis of policy formulation begins with the examination of different outputs of government policy. Then he endeavours to establish systematic relationships between those outputs and the differences in the process from which they evolved. Lowi distinguishes four types of policy output as follows:

1. "distributive" policies whereby resources are "disaggregated" into individual units which may be dispersed into isolated units where the loser and the recipient do not compete;
2. "redistributive" policies whereby resources are transferred within society which is centralised and hierarchical in decision-making;
3. "regulative" policies whereby there are many rival groups competing among one another, with some ending up as winners and others as losers; and
4. "constituent" policies relate to the application of indirect and remote coercion and are directed at large groups (Harman, 1980: 62; Hofferbert, 1974: 265).

This model distinguishes different types of educational policy based on outputs. It also attempts to link policy outputs to processes. One of its limitations is that it expresses policy in non-quantitative terms.

### **Interaction**

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) stressed the interrelationship between policy-making and policy implementation. They viewed policy-making as goal setting and committing funds for programmes of government action so as to fulfil objectives. The establishment of a programme was the first link of a causal chain connecting goals to programme of action, with implementation forging subsequent links to obtain the desired results. Hence, implementers are in a way responsible for both the initial goals that are formulated and the subsequent action that follows. There is therefore an interaction between policy formulation and policy implementation.

It is evident that implementers have to assume the responsibility for both the objectives and the action. They should be involved in "the setting of goals and action geared to achieving them" (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). In other words, they should consider the difficulties of implementation at the time of initial policy formulation, taking into consideration that in the process of implementation, conditions change.

### **Systems Model**

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) drew on Easton's (1965) model in their view of the linkages between policy-making and policy implementation. Easton identified the neat and logical processes in terms of demand initiation through the conversion process of outputs (Figure 2.3).

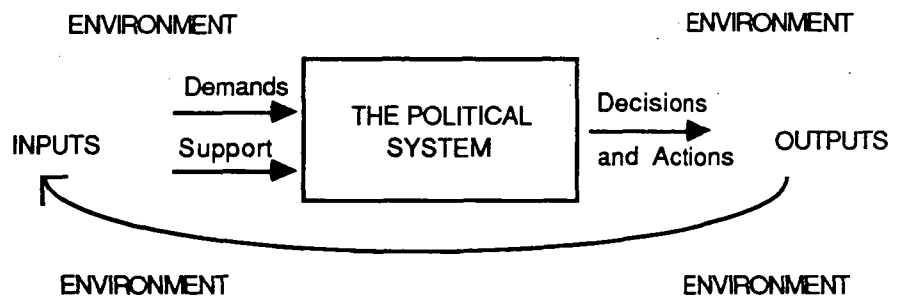


Figure 2.3 A simplified model of a political system

Source: Easton (1965) cited in Ham and Hill (1986: 14)

This model does not consider the "rhetoric of governments" (Dye, 1976: 21) and also the manner in which demands and supports interact with the political system. It does, however, take into consideration the relationship between political systems and other systems which are referred to as the "environment". It is this aspect of the environment that Van Meter and Van Horn have considered as significant in the policy domain and which they incorporate in the systems model. Figure 2.4 illustrates how the policy adopted and the services actually provided are shaped by six variables.

Resources, standards and objectives have an effect on intergovernmental communication and intergovernmental activities. Resources on the other hand affect the economic, social and political conditions and the interorganisational communication and enforcement activities. The character of the implementing agencies which interact with the environment affect the personal and psychological disposition of the implementers which ultimately affect performance.

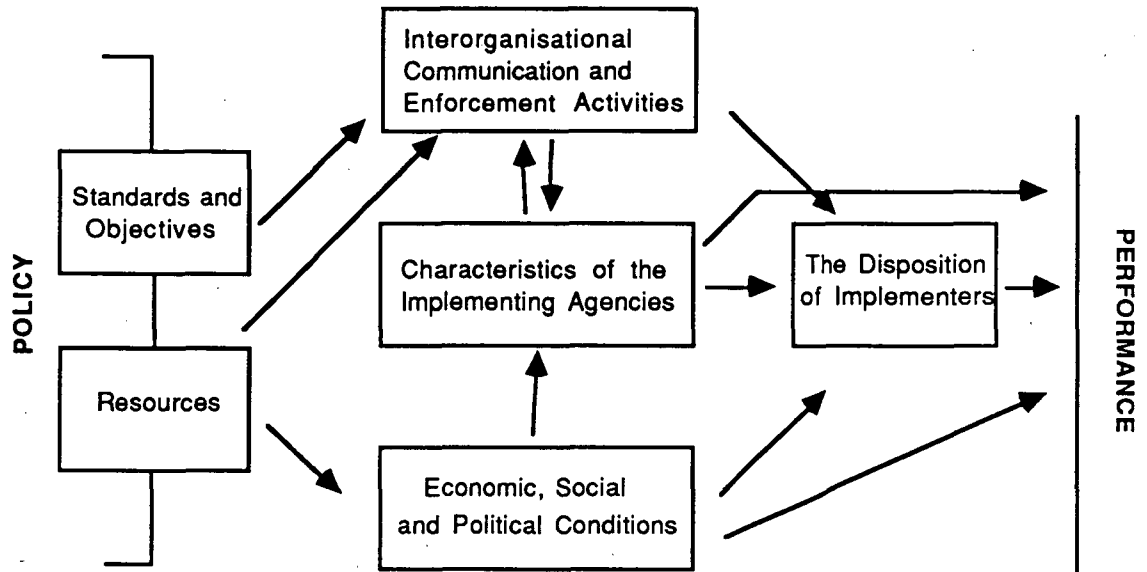


Figure 2.4 The Implementation Process

Source: Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463)

This model distinguishes policy from performance as two separate categories linked by six variables. There is some resemblance between this model and the commonsense model in so far as the distinction between policy and implementation are concerned. On the other hand, there is one basic difference in that the commonsense model does not bring out the linkages between "the decision" and "implementation". This model is closer to Pressman and Wildavsky's interaction model (1973).

### Mutual Adaptation

The Rand Corporation (1973) began a four year study of Federal programmes supporting educational change and identified three stages of innovation: designing new plans and committing resources to them; translating plans and adapting them to the institutional setting; and routinizing the innovation. The key concept identified in the translation of the plan into effective implementation was "mutual adaptation" of both the plan and the institutional setting.

Successful implementation of policies in this model depended upon the receptive institutional setting and the participants, in particular, who have to learn by doing and adapting their plans through programming, staff meetings and in-service training. In this model, adaptation of policy can occur only if there is a flexible attitude on the part of the implementers who have to cope with unanticipated implementation problems. Mutual adaptation can however take place both at the level of "the decision" and at the level of "implementation" in the commonsense model (Clay and Schaffer, 1984: 4), and it also implies "mutual adjustment . . . muddling through (where) . . . a policy is directed at a problem; it is tried, altered, tried in its altered form, altered again, and so forth" (Lindblom, 1959: 79).

### **Circular Process**

There are three areas of conflicting imperatives that have been identified by Rein and Rabinovitz (1978: 309 - 315) to occur during implementation. Randell (1982: 138) presents them as:

1. the legal imperative: the laws and regulations should not be contravened;
2. the rational-bureaucratic imperative: actions which are "morally correct, administratively feasible and intellectually defensible" should be resorted to; and
3. the consensual imperative: every effort should be made by the participants to come to a consensus.

These imperatives can only be resolved if the implementation process is circulatory i.e. the actors can participate in any part of the process like legislation, guidelines, auditing and evaluation.

The circulatory model shown in Figure 2.5 served as a basis for further development by Nakamura and Smallwood (1980) who characterised the set of interconnected policy environments as three functional areas: policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. All three areas are interrelated. Policies



and actors can move from one to the other since linkages of communication in the environment tie the policy system together.

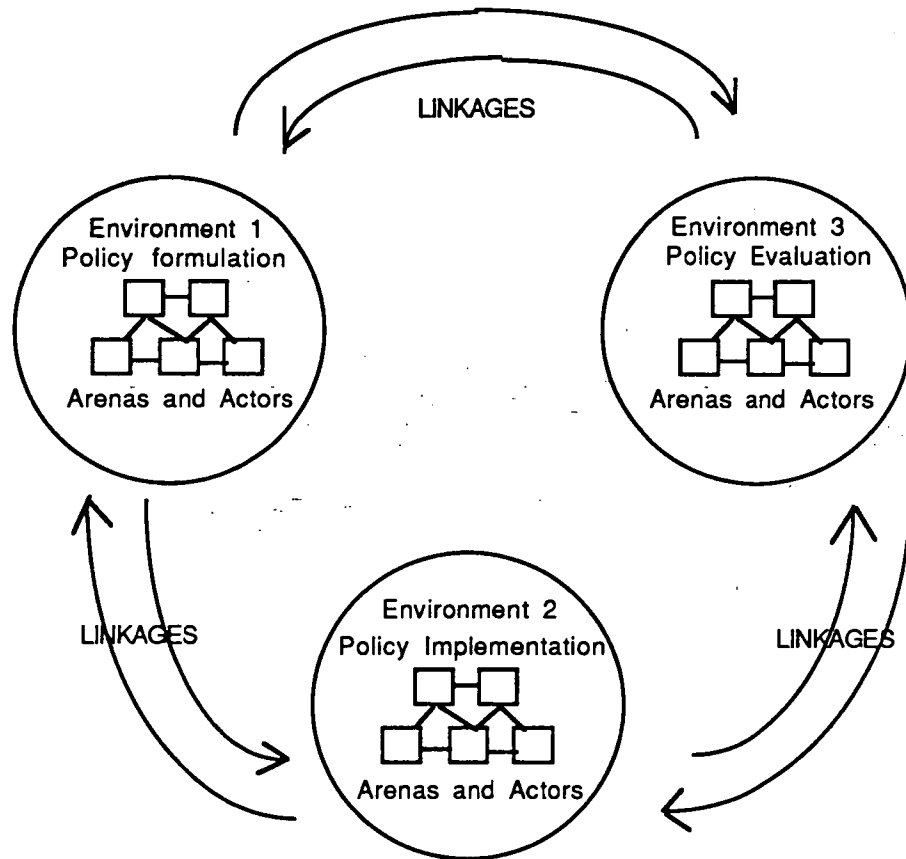


Figure 2.5 A System of Functional Environments

Source: Rein and Rabinovitz (1978: 27) modified by Nakamura and Smallwood (1980)

This model allows governmental and non-governmental agencies to take part in more than one environment since the system is cyclical and not hierarchical.

This model does not follow the linear commonsense pattern and divides policy implementation into three variable clusters i.e. formulation, implementation and evaluation, each with specific arenas and actors which are interrelated. The commonsense model nevertheless incorporates the three variable clusters i.e. "the

decision", implementation and evaluation but in a linear fashion rather than in a circulatory fashion.

### **Evolutionary**

Policy-making is identified by Majone and Wildavsky (1978: 103) as merely a starting point for a bargaining process among implementers. According to this model, administrators should be concerned with the process of implementation instead of the results of policy. Policy goals are often vague, conflicting and confused. Implementation shapes policies just as policy formulation shapes implementation by "defining the setting, supplying the resources, identifying the actors and describing their roles (Kandell, 1983: 139). Implementation is thus evolutionary, consisting both of finding answers and framing questions and, as the problems are reformulated, solutions change. This model brings policy-making and policy implementation closer.

Implementation is thus an evolutionary process:

since it takes place in a world we never made, we are usually right in the middle of the process, with events having occurred before and (we hope) continuing afterward. At each point we must cope with new circumstances that allow us to actualise different potentials in whatever policy ideas we are implementing. When we act to implement a policy we change it (Majone and Wildavsky, 1978).

### **Macro-Micro Process**

Berman (1978: 157) designed a conceptual framework that identifies four passages in the policy arena. First, policy is formulated and translated at macro or national level into programmes. Second, the programmes are adapted locally. Third, the local projects are implemented and, finally, implementation practice leads to outcomes.

The macro-micro model follows a rational linear pattern with policy emerging at the macro or national level with specific programmes to be executed and appropriate resources allocated. It does not take into consideration the gaps that might exist between the four passages.

### **Interaction: Iannaccone Typology**

The typology of interaction among policy actors was pioneered by Iannaccone (1975) who assumed that the legislature and the education lobbyists in each state in the United States could be treated as a single complex political sub-system. He recognised four patterns of organisational links as follows:

1. the locally-based disparate pattern looks at the school districts at state level and tries to prevent the control from federal government;
2. the state-wide monolithic pattern is a pyramid involving educational interests of the state with the legislature - (this pattern is also characterised by the high level of consensus among the educational interests);
3. the state-wide fragmented pattern represents wide-ranging approaches by education interests to the legislature - (this is marked by conflict among different groups); and
4. the state-wide syndical pattern refers only to the state of Illinois with a formal governmental unit comprised also of interests groups having a direct and tangible stake in the outcome of public school decisions.

This typology is a useful basis for classifying a lobbyist-government pattern of interaction although it suffers from a defect since it omits all reference to state level official actors other than the legislature.

### **Garbage Can**

Cohen, March and Oslen, who developed the "garbage can" model for the study of political process in universities, assumed that some organisations are

"organised anarchies", that is, they do not have well-defined goals, with very unclear ideas about inputs-outputs and have "fluid participants" (Harman, 1980) whose working timetable is not well-organised. Such anarchies are characterised by a continuous flow of problems, solutions and decision-making. The decisions emerge as a result of complex interplay of problems, personnel, solutions and alternative opportunity of choice. The opportunities of choice are viewed as empty vessels or "garbage cans" in which participants dump various "kinds of problems and solutions as they are generated" (Harman, 1980). In this model, the organisational sub-systems are loosely linked with the overall administrative structure and hence are not a true reflection of the total organisation. However, the advantage of this model is that it provides an explanation of the complex nature of decision-making processes in organisations. It is also of limited application to particular policy situations such as those relating to school boards and to universities.

### **Model for Comparative Study of Policy Formation**

Hofferbert (1974: 225) considers policy-making to be related, first, to elite behaviour. Elite behaviour refers to the actions of those who are close to the decision-making processes. Among these elite, some are elected by popular preference while others are appointed through legally defined means. Still others participate because of their status in private groups.

Second, socioeconomic patterns demonstrate that policy patterns are determined by environmental contexts that in turn influence the behaviour of the policy-making elite. The environmental factors consist of historic and geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour and governmental institutions. Nothing happens in a vacuum and he argues that "policy-makers are never confronted with a clean slate, either in terms of relevant circumstances of immediate political consequence or in terms of past policy commitments" (Hofferbert, 1974: 225).

Third, the time element involved in this analysis is relatively short e.g. a few weeks or months or a few years. It is also considered that changes tend to be incremental rather than abrupt, which is a point already considered by Lindblom (1959).

Figure 2.6 is a diagrammatic representation of the policy formation model by Hofferbert (1974). This scheme shows requisite actions and resources flowing into the end of the funnel and resulting into a formal policy conversion, that is, a recognition that it is a decision. Sector (a) of the model shows that history and geography are intricately woven into actions of contemporary policy-makers. Sector (b) of the model represents the social and economic structures of political systems. The relationship between sectors (a) and (b) are described in the following terms:

History and geography help to condition the social and economic structures of political systems. But social structures and economic conditions can, at least analytically, be separated from the more obvious historical and geographical determinants (Hofferbert, 1974: 229).

Sector (c) of the model represents mass political behaviour which is reflected in the terms of voter turnout, party structure and "associational activity . . . in socioeconomically similar jurisdictions" (Hofferbert, 1974: 230). Sector (d) of the model represents governmental institutions like constitutions, legislatures and executives. Sector (e) of the model represents the elite behaviour which is crucial to formal policy conversion. All possible pre-conversion routes to formal policy pass through this sector. Hofferbert argues "that any combination of 'pre-elite' factors may be operative on a given policy proposal, but elite response in some formal manner is a sine qua non of policy . . ." (Hofferbert, 1974: 231).

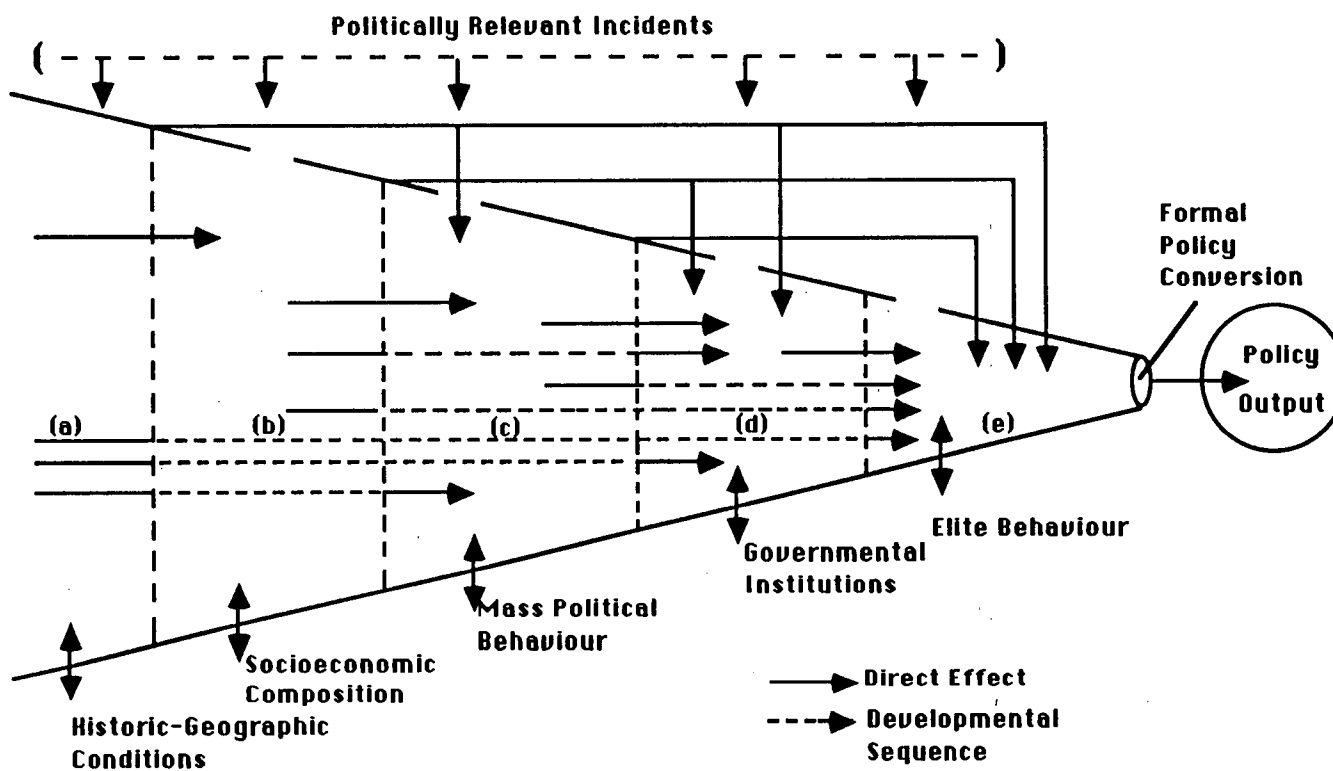


Figure 2.6 Model for Comparative Study of Policy Formation  
Source: Hofferbert (1974: 228)

The actions of formal office-holders are a "necessary" condition of policy-making and they serve as a point of departure in the search for "sufficient" conditions. Elite behaviour is also examined in terms of "leadership", "ideology" and "initiative".

The solid arrows outside and above the main funnel represent the "by-pass" routes. For instance, historic-geographic conditions have moulded governmental institutions irrespective of socioeconomic composition or the range of mass political behaviour that exists within a state. Similarly, social development and mass behaviour may influence elite behaviour and policy directly, irrespective of existing variation in governmental institutions. However, some features of the historical, socioeconomic, mass and governmental environments have a reasonably stable and predictable impact on the directions of policy. Some variables also gain in strength while others decline.

The developmental effect arrows are placed within the funnel because the "normal" processes in the creation of policy will be expected to be composed of the relatively constant historical-social-mass-political institutional conditioning of elite behaviour. The phenomena in categories (a), (b), (c) and (d) provide the backdrop for (e). The elite may however "overcome, suppress or exploit, but not ignore" (Hofferbert, 1974: 233) such a set of circumstances under normal conditions. Any "by-passing" of interim sectors such as (a-e), (b-d) and (a-b-e) would be deviant cases. However, social changes and "politically relevant incidents" like wars may bring in variables that lead to a decline of some variables while others gain prominence.

This model seeks to explain the relevance of social structures to the policy performance and is flexible enough to accommodate issues emerging as a result of politically relevant incidents. It also explains how policy-makers act in a publicly consequential way because of their perceptions of social needs, personal political gain and sense of history. Another strength of this model is that it views the behaviour of individual policy-makers as taking place within various contexts. In a way, the model

helps to sort out what is contextual and that which is individual. The analysis of the elite activity moves towards the resolution of a number of contentious problems in understanding policy formulation and policy implementation. In Hofferbert's view (1974: 242), solving these problems ultimately leads to the advancement of theory. He admits that although the policy-makers in advanced countries produce different outputs than their counterparts in developing countries, the model does not illustrate "how it works in human terms" (Hofferbert, 1974: 242). But based on his extensive case studies in the USA, Hofferbert (1974: 244) argues that "no matter how constraining the resources of the socioeconomic and political environments, there appears always to be room for the impact of leadership and individual policy-making initiative." Hofferbert (1974: 245) specifies that he drew heavily from Walker's (1969) study of eighty-six innovations in different fields ranging from education to taxation, enacted by at least twenty legislatures prior to 1965, showing the pattern of emulation and diffusion of these innovations from one state to another, confirming the crucial role played by the elite. The prominence of the concept of elite is unique and represents a promising approach to the understanding of the policy arena both in developed and developing countries.

## **ANALYSIS OF MODELS**

In this chapter, fourteen models of policy-making were explored. These models relate not only to the education sector but to different sectors of major government programmes. The main purpose of this exploration was to identify which model or factors within them, if any, could guide an investigation of policy in Mauritius. It may be that no one model does incorporate the totality of how policy is made, who makes policy, the mechanism of government in implementing policy and how these are related to successful implementation (Bardach, 1977; Salamon, 1979). This view is supported by Peterson (1976) who perceives that "Each is only a snapshot of a multidimensional event," and that "predictive mathematical models"



(Blaug and Corres, 1978) depict only one segment of the reality. An illuminating insight into the use of these models as tools is provided by Harman (1980: 69):

... there is a temptation of thinking of them in terms of alternate ways of conceptualising reality, or of describing what the policy process should be like ... They should all be thought of partly as different kinds of activities, and partly as tools that can be used in combination.

The concern here is to identify and select a model or a partial model or models in combination that might be employed to guide the study of policy in Mauritius. In order to pursue this end, it was found useful to use certain criteria for appraising these models. These criteria have been presented by Dye (1972) and are considered as a starting point for examining the utility of these models. These criteria will thus assist in the selection of a model that may serve as a starting point for the development of the conceptual framework for the study.

### **Dye's Criteria**

The criteria for the appraisal of a model according to Dye are as follows:

1. orderly and simple: the model should help in the understanding of relationships in the real world; but it should not be too simple or too complex;
2. congruent with the reality: it should correspond with what actually occurs and could be identified easily in the field;
3. possess communicative power: the communication should provide no ground for disagreement;
4. provide a basis for enquiry and research: it should be possible to observe, verify and measure steps through reference to real occurrences;
5. suggest an explanation of the total process: it should represent the essential features which characterise the process; and

6. be flexible enough to cope with conflicting situations: it should be convenient to adapt itself to turbulent situations.

In summary then, models should be orderly and simple, congruent with reality, possess communicative power, provide a basis for enquiry and research, explain the total process and demonstrate flexibility. An orderly and simple model refers to one which helps in the clear understanding of its various parts and the way they are interrelated. Such a model may be systematically applied as a tool to understanding situations that are observed in the field. A model that is congruent with reality is one that reflects a close matching between the "real world" as it is experienced by actors in the policy domain and the various elements in the model. A model that possesses communicative power is one that can be easily understood. A model that provides a basis for enquiry and research is one that contains elements that can be easily described, observed and measured in the field. A model that suggests an explanation of the total process is one that is constructed in such a way as to present in a convincing and credible way the totality of all the elements as seen in the field situation. A model that demonstrates flexibility is one that is constructed in a way as to allow a wide range of actions and actors, including those that are unexpected.

### **An Appraisal of Models Against Dye's Criteria**

All of the fourteen models were appraised against the criteria established by Dye. This result of this exercise is shown in Figure 2.7. The previous paragraph presented an explanation of the way in which these criteria are understood in this study. It is however acknowledged that the test of these models against Dye's criteria reflects some degree of relativity and subjectivity. The aim of this exercise was to identify and select a model, or part of a model, or models in combination, that are generally suitable for the study, as a guide with further refinement after considering public policy in developing nations in Chapter 3.

## CRITERIA : DYE

MODELS	1. Orderly/ Simple	2. Reality	3. Communicative Power	4. Enquiry/ Research	5. Total Process	6. Flexibility
1. Clay/Schaffer Mainstream Model	√	O	√	√	√	O
2. Lindblom "Disjointed Incrementalism"	√	√M	√	√	√	√
3. Truman Political Power Game	√	√M	√	√	O	O
4. Peterson/Elmore Bargaining	√	√M	√	√	O	√
5. Lowi Politics	√	√M	√	√	O	√
6. Pressman/Wildavsky Interaction	√	√M	√	√	O	√
7. Van Horn/Van Meter/Easton Systems Model	√	√M	√	√	O	√
8. Rand Corporation Mutual Adaptation	√	√	√	√	O	√
9. Rein/Rabinovitz Nakamura/Smallwood Circular Process	√	√M	√	√	√	√
10. Majone/Wildavsky Evolutionary	√	√M	√	√	O	√
11. Berman Macro-micro Process	√	O	√	√	√	O
12. Iannaccone Interaction	√	√M	√	√	O	O
13. Cohen/March/Osien Garbage Can	√	√M	√	√	O	O
14. Hofferbert Comparative Study	√	√	√	√	√	√

**Key:** √ = Satisfies this criterion to a relatively high degree  
√M = Satisfies this criterion to a relatively moderate degree  
O = Satisfies this criterion to a relatively low degree

FIGURE 2.7 An Appraisal of Models Against Dye's Criteria

It was apparent that most of the models reviewed are orderly and simple. They possess communicative power and might be useful for application in enquiry and research. The mainstream (rational) model and the macro-micro process model are judged to lack realism to the extent that their elements are not easily discerned in the field. To illustrate this point, the mainstream model is considered. This model represents an ideal view of the way policy should be made. But policy-making in the real world has a limited rationality. This point is supported by Dye (1983: 8) who perceives that "Policy-making occurs in a political context which places severe limits on rationality." The political context is concerned with the problem that confronts society and what the government does to improve the situation. The number of alternatives that can be explored is so great and the information to appraise them is so vast, that it is difficult to conceive rationality. There is rarely, if ever, the time or other resources to explore the alternatives.

Second, the macro-micro process model also illustrates a rational linear pattern of decision-making. Like the mainstream model, it fails to consider the various gaps that might emerge at different stages of policy-making. It considers that once a policy is formulated and translated into programmes at governmental level or macro level, these are necessarily implemented, as intended, at the grass-root level or micro-level. In reality, it would appear that implementation faces many barriers.

Third, of all the models, only the mainstream model and the macro-micro process model have been found rather rigid since it is perceived that they are not capable of accommodating a wide range of actions and actors, and especially lack the ability to cope with contingencies. The view is that very few models encompass the totality of the process in the policy domain. Most of them represent "a snapshot" of the reality as it exists in the field. However, in general, the mainstream model, the "disjointed incrementalism" model, the circular process model, the interaction model, the macro-micro process model and the Hofferbert model suggest an explanation of

the totality of all the elements as seen in the field situation. It is posited that each of these models might provide a strong basis for enquiry and research.

The lessons that may be drawn from this analysis are:

1. Of all the models, only five of them, namely the mainstream model, the "disjointed incrementalism" model, the circular process model, macro-micro process model and the Hofferbert model encompass the totality of the process in the policy domain. The rest of them represent generally a "snapshot" of the reality as it exists in the field situation.
2. Of all the models, only the Rand Corporation model and the Hofferbert model reflect a close matching between the "real world" actors and those found in the models.
3. Of all the models, five of them, namely the mainstream model, political power game model, macro-micro model, interaction (Iannaccone) model and the garbage can model are considered to lack flexibility because they do not appear to make allowance for a wide range of actions, actors and, especially, any room for contingencies.

However, it was the judgement of the researcher that the Hofferbert model may best serve as a tool for enquiry and research, on the grounds that it is the only one that appear to satisfy all the criteria of Dye. Its structure is orderly and simple, it reflects the reality and can be easily understood, it explains the total process and is flexible enough to incorporate newly emerging elements.

### **The Hofferbert Model**

An examination of the structure of the Hofferbert model reveals that the factors are organised in an orderly and simple way, starting from the left of the model, with historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, elite behaviour and incorporates also politically relevant

incidents. This classification of factors appears to be logical, convincing and the message that it endeavours to convey can be easily grasped.

This model is comprehensive in the manner in which it contains factors like the history and geography of the country, the society and economy, elections or referenda, the type of government and politically relevant incidents like famine, flood and war. All of these may condition or have an impact on the behaviour of the actors, both visible and non-visible, in the "real world". It is thus asserted that this model highlights in a convincing manner the world of reality.

Elements like history and geography, society and economy as presented in this model, may be easily described and observed in the real world. It is posited that this model forcefully illustrates that, generally, it is the history and geography of a country that influence the society and the economy which in turn determine how the masses will behave politically and hence give shape to the type of government. Hofferbert (1974: 231) argues that whatever the context, "elite response in some formal manner (to these factors) is a sine qua non of policy . . . "

But at the same time, this model has an inbuilt flexibility in it to incorporate the element of politically relevant incidents which refers to emerging situations like war, famine and flood to which the policy-making elite have to respond. This is a political aspect which may be of importance as suggested by Dye (1983), that policy is "largely political" and it is "political art and craft" (Wildavsky cited in Dye, 1983: 18). Another point that shows how flexible this model is is that all elements within the model may impinge upon the elite simultaneously or in groups or singly, depending upon the situations.

The Hofferbert model presents the factors that condition elite behaviour in an orderly and simple manner; it generally encompasses the major environmental factors in a manner which is easily understood; it explains the total process encompassing a large number of possible actions and actors with their specific behaviours. Its inbuilt flexibility ensures the incorporation of newly emerging elements. It may, therefore,

be considered as an appropriate foundation for building the conceptual framework for the study, a task undertaken in Chapter 4 after a more detailed consideration of Mauritius and other islands in the developing world.

## **Conclusion**

The models explored in Chapter 2, taken together, have four underlying commonalities. They are:

1. political factors concerned with government, conflicts in values and norms and the mechanisms to resolve them; these are illustrated by Truman (1951), Lindblom (1970), Dror (1971), Iannaccone (1975), Bardach (1977), Elmore (1978), Rein and Rabinovitz (1978), Majone and Wildavsky (1978), Nakamura and Smallwood (1980), Harman (1980), and Clay and Schaffer (1984).
2. economic factors concerned with financial resource allocations and the way they affect economic, social and political conditions; these are illustrated by Easton (1965), Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), and Van Meter and Van Horn (1975).
3. sociological factors concerned with human relationships and the morale of the personnel, and the way they relate to other factors in the environment; these are illustrated by Rand Corporation (1973), and Berman and McLaughlin (1976).
4. geographical factors concerned with territorial jurisdiction and the spatial relationship of different natural phenomena within a specific environment; these are illustrated by Easton (1965), Dye (1976) and Berman (1978).

Each of the abovementioned factors appear to exist in the Hofferbert model where they are presented in an orderly and systematic way, they demonstrate reality, possess communicative power, are flexible enough to incorporate new elements, reflect the total process and provide a basis for enquiry and research. Further, the Hofferbert model brings out clearly three other important political factors that have so far not been focused upon in any other model. These are politically relevant incidents

such as crisis situations, mass political behaviour such as elections or referenda, and elite behaviour such as the actions of the decision-makers.

It seems that the Hofferbert model does include most of the factors affecting the policy process, both in the making and shaping of policies and in the ways in which they are constrained by contextual factors like historic-geographical conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions and politically relevant incidents. Further, such a large number of environmental factors within a single model may be appropriate for application to complex situations involving all kinds of problems within the private or public sector.

The purpose of this research was to gain understanding of the public policy in education in Mauritius. The Hofferbert model provides a single "model of choice" (Dye, 1983: 5) for gaining such an understanding and a convenient starting point for the development of a conceptual framework for the study. Consideration is now given to the exploration of the small island states that have certain commonalities with Mauritius. The purpose of the next chapter is to find out whether there are other factors which might be useful in enhancing the understanding of the policy domain in Mauritius.



## **Chapter 3                      Review of special characteristics of public policy in three regional clusters of island nations among developing countries**

So far, the exploration of models of policy-making and policy implementation was based largely on literature from the developed countries. The people and the institutions involved in the policy arena functioned in environments that were different from those of developing countries. It is fair to believe that approaches to policy activities may be different in some important ways from those in developing countries. Although Hofferbert's (1974) model has been singled out as an appropriate comprehensive framework for the understanding of the policy domain, it is possible that other elements in the environment of the three regional clusters of island countries might be identified and accommodated in the Hofferbert model. This line of thinking is supported by Hofferbert (1974: 259) who argued that: "To understand why policies are as they are, one must look beyond individual actors and institutional settings to the sociopolitical context within which the actions occur and within which the institutions persist". Since each social context is unique, it is asserted that it is inappropriate to apply generalisations from the broad context of the developed countries to that of the regional clusters of islands in developing countries.

One significant characteristic that shapes the thinking of policy-makers in developing countries is that most of these were former colonies of West European imperial powers. This means that they should be looked at in terms of the significance of strong national cultural traditions, with deep historical roots, which are widely disseminated among the people, and the special relationships, values and perceptions

that have continued to persist between the ex-colonial powers and the independent nations.

Any political activity in the Third World places a heavy demand on all those who take part in it. An independent nation like Mauritius cannot ignore its setting that comprises one million people who are ethnically divided and there are practically no natural resources and a very narrow technological base. The influence from the relatively unstable and poverty-ridden African Continent to which it geographically belongs cannot be overlooked. The option for Mauritius is therefore not "whether" to be dependent but on "whom" to be dependent. Foreign aid constitutes additional resources which are important for starting and accelerating the process of development. Education is one such area that receives the attention of aid donors.

Chapter 2 examined fourteen models. They contained four commonalities, namely political, economic, sociological and geographical. The Hofferbert model was initially considered as a starting point for the development of a conceptual framework for the study. The specificity of Mauritius warranted a review of the situation in similar island states such as those of the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. This approach is considered fair since it was intended to facilitate the understanding of Mauritius within a wider context. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to identify factors other than those found in Chapter 2 which may illuminate our understanding of the policy domain in Mauritius. With this end in view, this chapter will consist of four sections as follows:

1. the concepts of "developing country" or the "Third World" and "basic needs";
2. the special characteristics of the three regional clusters of island nations: the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific;
3. some approaches to the understanding of the policy domain in developing countries and their applicability to the selected three clusters of developing

island nations of the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific; and

4. an analysis based on the findings in this chapter.

The examination in the first section of the term "developing country" and its associated concept, "basic needs", is intended to enhance our understanding of the so-called developing countries and their specific settings which have a bearing on public policy activities, the way they are organised and perceived. The definitions of the term "developing country" and the "basic needs" concept will be an entry point to the chapter and are considered advantageous since they will then lead on to the identification of the special characteristics of these selected island countries and the way they affect public policy.

The second major concern in this chapter is to identify the special characteristics of the three regional clusters of island countries insofar as they have a direct impact on public policy activities. This provides an insight into the way in which public policy is organised and perceived in these developing countries and specifically in Mauritius. It will also bring out why certain circumstances are different from others and how these differences affect the policy domain.

Third, there are four current approaches to the understanding of these developing countries insofar as the working of their governments is concerned. These are the evolutionary, utopian and liberation, marxist, and dependency approaches which are briefly applied to developing countries in the three regional clusters, namely the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. All these countries are island nations like Mauritius and possess certain commonalities since "they have been created by conquest, political agreement and economic necessity" (Holmes, 1980: 1) although, with the passage of time, certain differences have emerged among them.

## **The Concepts of "developing country" or the "Third World" and "basic needs"**

It has been found useful to employ the term "developing country" or the "Third World" with care and in a critical way because it has been loosely used to define nations that are not well developed or which are undergoing development. It is commonly recognised that developing countries are those which are characterised by a low GNP, high level of unemployment, malnutrition, poor level of socioeconomic development and a deficit in the balance of payments. It is also not an easy task to determine when a "developing country" reaches the stage of a "developed country". In another sense, most countries are developing countries.

Marquez (cited in Chinapah, 1979: 65) perceives the "developing country" or the "Third World" in this way:

Today, one-quarter of humanity is in possession of three-quarters of the world's resources and, directly or indirectly, rules over the remainder of the planet. The dominated three-quarters of the world are what in general terms are called the "Third World" or "developing countries". Hidden behind the apparent unity contained in the term "Third World" are the profound differences which separate the different territories (or regions) of the world included under the name and, likewise, the differences which distinguish the different countries of each territory . . . The whole outlook which permits countries to be termed "underdeveloped" stems from the ethnocentrism of the imperialist powers.

Associated with the term "developing country" is the "basic needs" concept that has been constantly brought up in international conferences and forums under the aegis of the United Nations and other international organisations. This concept has long been at the core of practically all governments' agenda in poor and needy countries. Such countries are aspiring towards a basic goal, that being survival through the provision of the basic needs of life. Such basic necessities as water, food, health and housing are still a major concern of most nations in the Third World and the situation is likely to worsen in the light of population changes. Hughes (1983: 6-7), in his assessment of the future in developing countries, anticipates that the populations of:

1. developing countries will increase to 4.5 billion by 2000;
2. middle income developing countries will be 760 million by 2000; and
3. poorest developing countries will be 1650 million by 2000 and will need substantial aid.

The "basic needs" concept forms the backdrop of all development and policy activities in developing countries and it will now be explored as it is brought up and discussed at international forums and conferences.

A resolution of the United Nations led to the adoption of strategies in the "Declaration" and "Programme of Action" to challenge existing ideas about basic necessities of life and the international economic relations. A symposium sponsored by the United Environmental Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) resulted in the unanimous approval of the "Declaration of Cocoyoc" (1974) that redefined development in terms of human development and basic needs: "Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, education. Any process of growth that does not lead to this fulfilment - or even worse disrupts them - is a travesty of the idea of development".

This declaration also focused on the acute problems caused by the unequal distribution and unplanned use of resources, the pattern of consumption of goods and services between the world's majority and the wealthy few. The declaration also asserted that development must deal with human dignity, liberty and the right to work. Subsequent to the meeting on the need for a "New Economic Order", UNESCO helped to set up many educational projects related to this theme in most of the Third World.

The theme of development was further emphasized by the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation Report, "What Now - Another Development" (1975). Besides the basic needs - food, shelter, education and health - required by the poor that form the

world's majority, the Report stressed that development should "ensure the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs for expression, creativity, conviviality and for deciding his own destiny." It also advised political leaders on the relevance of such a study. UNESCO's expertise in this field was, in most cases, made available and the projects are still on-going in many developing countries.

Another theme in "Another Development" was a reduction of inequality among nations and the establishment of new power structures. This was a challenge to holders of power at national and international levels. UNESCO (1978) supported the themes of the Dag Hammarskjöld Report as expressing the legitimate rights of the Third World countries. The theme of the "New International Economic Order" was further developed by the Aspen Working Group (1975) which focused on two levels of basic needs for the developing and the late developing countries. The "first floor" is minimum human needs, the food, health and education to which each person should be entitled by virtue of being born into the world we call civilized. Making this entitlement a reality for everyone is a realistically time-phased plan and should be regarded as a joint responsibility of each nation concerned and of the community of nations. The "second floor" would be such other basic needs as are defined (and redefined over time) by each nation-state for its own people, within the context of the interdependence of all societies.

Unemployment was another burning issue of the poor societies that was taken up at the "Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress" in June 1976. This Conference looked at an employment-oriented approach to development that should include:

- ... minimum requirements of a family for private consumption: adequate food; shelter and clothing, as certain household equipment and furniture . .
- . they include essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking-water, sanitation, public transport and health, educational and cultural facilities.

Another justification for the New International Economic Order, commissioned by the Club of Rome was given by Jan Tinbergen at the RIO (Reshaping the International Order - 1976) Conference. "Society as a whole must accept the responsibility for guaranteeing a minimum level of welfare for all its citizens and aim at equality in human relations . . . It follows that the problem of development must be redefined as a selective attack on the worst forms of poverty".

The world-power structures were attacked and the need for a balanced development, self-reliance and participation in decision-making was strongly felt. Two types of needs were reiterated at the Conference: first, there are material needs for the survival of mankind like food, shelter, clothing and health; second, there are non-material needs like education, leisure and socio-cultural activities. A similar view was echoed by the study conducted under the auspices of the Bariloche Foundation - Argentina, called "Catastrophe or New Society? A Latin American Model" (1976).

UNESCO (1978) supported the view that the needs strategy of developing countries should be looked at in relation to society, economy, politics and demography. The structures created to eradicate unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition and ill-health should work in accordance with the principle of self-reliance, balanced development, equity, fairness and self-respect.

This review has brought out the serious concern of the international and national organisations over the issues that plague the developing countries in particular. Education has a crucial role to play in the eradication of poverty as manifested in different ways. The basic needs of the poor societies have to be met before other developments could take place. In this exploration, the focus is on a particular sector or related sectors of public policy activity (e.g. poverty) that affect educational policies. This is a legitimate approach because a large number of issues related to poverty and the way it has a bearing on education, are constantly being discussed at international forums. Such discussions have always a profound impact on

socio-economic development which in turn affect policy-making and policy implementation in most of these developing countries, including Mauritius.

International organisations and agencies under the aegis of the United Nations depict a bleak picture of the cultural landscape of the Third World. The need for a "New International Economic Order" in order to redress the disparities that exist between the haves and the have-nots and to ensure a sustained economic development, peace and justice for present and future generations, was a commendable resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on May 1, 1974.

One of the ways this could be achieved, as suggested by the United Nations, is through the formulation of right policies and their effective implementation. Most of the reports lay stress on the problem of orientation for the future development strategies. This is a new approach to the problems of underdevelopment, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, sanitation, health, shelter and clothing.

Education is central to all development. In most developing countries, educational policies discussed under the aegis of the UN agencies like UNESCO, have been finding ways of improving the conditions of the rural poor, the landless, female-headed households, and nutritionally vulnerable segments of the population, such as nursing-mothers and pre-school children. In the case of pre-school children and the handicapped, UNICEF and UNDP are playing a significant role in advising governments on policy matters and in providing substantial aid.

It is generally regarded that schooling contributes significantly towards economic development in developing countries. This view is supported by many international organisations, including the Commonwealth Secretariat (1985: 4) which went so far as to suggest that: "Education should also contribute to a sense of nationhood and to the development of diverse and culturally plural society."



In this chapter, the examination of concepts like "developing country" and "basic needs" has provided a basis for understanding the major issues confronting developing countries. The next section of this chapter will explore three regional clusters of island nations within developing countries. The purpose is to illustrate the commonalities that exist among them, including Mauritius, and to provide an insight into the environmental factors that shape the actions of government.

### **The Special Characteristics of Three Regional Clusters of Island Countries**

The definition of developing countries and the related "basic needs" concept provide an entry point for the exploration of the special characteristics of these developing countries. It is evident that developing countries are faced with serious problems that condition the actions of governments. The search for minimum requirements for life is a strong factor that affects the behaviour of all those who are close to the decision-making processes. A government in a developing country cannot ignore the environmental realities that shape decisions and priorities. The situation in developing countries, in a way, runs parallel to that which occurred during the Industrial Revolution in Britain when improvements in industry led to increased wealth but also resulted in unprecedented social misery of the majority of the people.

The general trends seen in the literature on developing countries reveal that the way governmental activities are conducted have to be evaluated in terms of the situational constraints imposed by the contexts. These contexts include the physical, social, economic and political relationships. But there is a stronger trend towards considering developing countries in an historical context, emphasising their relationships with their former Western imperial powers, generally in terms of dependency and interdependency. It is argued here that the behaviour of those who are close to the decision-making processes is influenced generally by the ecological,

economic, social and political constraints under which they work. They will act differently from people in other kinds of societies.

Two assumptions are made as a prelude to embarking on the study of the environment of island nations among the developing countries. The first is that the behaviour of decision-makers is unintelligible outside its proper historical context. The second is that the ecological, economic, social and political dimensions must be assessed to determine the ways government works. The premise is, therefore, that the physical setting, the social system and the history of the three regional clusters i.e the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, have powerful effects on the decision-making processes and the associated policy related activities of their respective governments. An analysis of this range of factors provides an illuminating insight into the commonalities and differences among these island states and the way they affect the work of their respective governments.

One regional cluster comprises the circum-Caribbean mainland from French Guiana to Mexico i.e. the Yukatan Peninsula. This region also includes the French DOMTOM (Department Outre Mer Territoire Outre Mer, i.e Overseas Departments and Territories belonging to France) with islands like La Martinique and Guadeloupe.

The South West Indian Ocean, on the other hand, is made up of four distinct groups of islands and archipelagoes as follows:

1. the Mascarene group comprises Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion; Reunion is a French department while Rodrigues is a dependency of Mauritius;
2. the Chagos Archipelago (excluding Diego Garcia), the Agalega Islands, Tromelin and Cargados Carajos Islands are all dependencies of Mauritius;
3. the Comores are made up of four major islands and belong to France while the Malagasy Republic, an ex-French colony, is an independent marxist state; and

4. the Seychelles, an ex-British territory, and once a dependency of Mauritius, is made up of over ninety islands and is now a marxist state.
5. the South Pacific Islands considered here are the ex-British colonies like the Fiji Islands, Tonga, Solomon, Vanuatu, Kiribati and the French department of La Nouvelle Caledonie.

The criteria utilised for the selection of these regional clusters are based on the similarities that exist among them in terms of the cultural environments that have evolved as a result of a similar history of colonisation and plantation agriculture. Many of the issues in education are similar and it is appropriate to see how different situations are met in lands scattered far and wide on the globe.

All three developing regions are characterised by the imperialistic domination during the course of their history. Historically, multi-cultural nations have been created by conquest, political agreement and economic necessity. Traditionally, educational policies represent the outcome of battles and conflicts of long ago and were formulated and implemented as a consequence of consensus or imposition (Holmes, 1980: 1).

The major colonial powers were British, French and Dutch. The colonial period saw the migration of slaves from Africa and indentured labourers from India across the oceans to sugar plantations. These new migrants brought diversifying and disrupting influences upon the autochthonous population which existed in some cases. The social setting subsequently became a melting-pot of races and religious, ethnic groups and diverse needs, attitudes and ways of life. By and large, these communities inherited organisational and institutional models which, in some cases, have been subjected to other influences like politics and ideology, national identity, economic dependence and interdependence which resulted in adapted models of governance. For instance, ex-British Seychelles does not follow the Westminster pattern just as ex-French Madagascar does not follow the "Assemblée Nationale" of Paris. These three

regional clusters of islands are now looked at in terms of the commonalities and dissimilarities insofar as the physical, racial-religio-linguistic, social, economic and political contexts are concerned and which have a critical influence on educational policies and practices.

### **The Physical Context**

The evolution of these island states in the three regional clusters is influenced by geography and history. These are characterised by insularity, tropical climatic conditions and unequal distribution of natural resources. Weather fluctuations, rainfall, soil fertility, water supply, elevation of the land, vegetation patterns, insects and animal pests and population size relative to land resources, affect the way the government in each of these island states perceives development.

Good weather conditions in Reunion or Mauritius, for instance, bring a bumper sugar crop, whereas cyclones may destroy all the crops and bring disaster to the country. This has serious implications for policy since these countries depend heavily upon the sugar industry. The bumper period will bring an accelerated development in education, for instance, and the contrary happens when natural disasters like cyclones, drought or flood hit those countries. A more stable economy tends to support a high population. The premise is that when conditions are harsh, as in the hilly tracts of Reunion, one should expect different kinds and degrees of policy-making processes than when they are more benign as in the irrigated tracts of the Northern Plains of Mauritius.

Unequal distribution of natural resources has profound influences, not only on the distribution and density of population, but also on the cultural characteristics, each of which has substantial implications for policy and development. Long distances separating the mainland from the peripheral islands, as in the Seychelles, with poor communications by air and sea, affect the unity of the nations. Policies made and

implemented on the mainland, i.e. the core, may not be applicable to the outer islands, i.e. the periphery. For instance, policies regarded as sound for Mahe, which is the core of Seychelles, are not applicable to the periphery which comprises over ninety islands, with contrasting environment and scattered population. This "core-periphery" concept (Wallerstein, 1974; Selwyn, 1976) has serious implications for policy and policy-related activities. For instance, the ease with which the Mauritius farmer can make a living for himself and his family from agriculture, compared with the meagre living conditions of fishermen in offshore islands belonging to Mauritius, with contrasting environment and scattered population, has a direct impact on the decision-makers.

### **The Racial-Religio-Linguistic Context**

Most of the states within the three regional clusters received slaves from Africa while a few like Mauritius, Reunion, Seychelles and Comores received them from Africa and Madagascar. After the abolition of slavery by Westminster in 1933, the need for plantation workers was felt all the more and India, which was a British colony at that time, provided a vast pool of cheap labour under the indenture system. Sugar and tea were of major interest to the West Europeans.

Some of the islands and archipelagoes were inhabited when the Europeans first arrived for the purpose of settlement. Mauritius, Rodrigues, Comores and the Seychelles had no indigenous population while the Fiji Islands, La Nouvelle Calédonie and Madagascar had. Colonial policies like "assimilation" or "acculturation" and "accommodation" of the labouring class with the indigenous population had profound influences upon the social strata and far-reaching consequences on the pattern of governance and human relations.

## **The Social Context**

Societies in such small states within the West Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific are so diverse that it is impossible to reflect a full range of influences. The cultural setting reflects the large variations in population ethnicity, classified by Lowenthal (1972: 78 - 79) into five distinct categories as follows:

1. the homogeneous societies without distinction of colour or class e.g. the creoles of Rodrigues and La Martinique;
2. societies differentiated by colour but not stratified by class e.g. Reunion Island and Comores;
3. societies stratified by both colour and class e.g. Antigua;
4. societies stratified by colour and class, but with white creoles or mulattoes absent or insignificant e.g. Seychelles; and
5. societies stratified by colour and class and containing sizeable ethnic groups mainly outside the colour-class hierarchy e.g. Madagascar and Reunion.

Within this "ethnological museum", the status of most ethnic groups depends upon the wealth and recognition that they have acquired through history. In some cases, clashes due to castes, class, creed and colour may be in vogue, while in others, the tendency may be towards tolerance, accommodation and assimilation of customs, traditions and ways of living. The ethnic backgrounds of these micro-states present a commonality of current problems and issues.

After independence, these states sought to take their destiny in their own hands. In some cases, these communities feel that they have been the victims of the coloniser's ignorance, prejudice and neglect. The complex and urgent problems which these people face today call for reconciliation of what remains of their cultural heritage and their need to enter with full dignity and competence into the modern world. The preservation of their cultural heritage brings these countries closer to their ancestral

lands, i.e. Europe, Africa, India and China. Educational policies reflect the diversity in ethnicity as well as the cultural heritage. In most cases, education guarantees the preservation and promotion of the cultural values while, at the same time, preserves the cultural identity of each ethnic group both within the core and the periphery.

In the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, there are a number of variables which generally influence educational policy-making and policy implementation. They are race, colour and class, economy and human ecology, religion and politics. Race, colour and class are "closely entwined with human activities such as occupation and schooling among the foremost threads" (Brock, 1984: 161-162). In general, the historic relationship between race, colour, class and education emerging from the peculiar socioeconomic context i.e. slavery, indenture and sugar, have given rise to three stratified social layers which, according to Brock (1984: 166), are as follows:

1. the superordinate white and creole elite educated in metropolitan schools or in local private and/or denominational secondary schools;
2. a minority creole or "middle-class" which has emerged alongside the provision of the public education system and is characteristically urban-based, professionally employed and interested in the maintenance of the selective principle; and
3. a majority negro peasantry, descended from slavery, and subsisting on a ceiling of primary education.

Before the abolition of slavery in the three regional clusters, the only educational provision was for the "plantocracy", a term which refers to the large sugar plantation owners. Although the plantocracy still continued to wield indefinite power, the Roman Catholic Church in the South West Indian Ocean and, to a lesser extent in the South Pacific, and the Anglican Church in the Caribbean, took some interest in the education of the masses only after the emancipation of the slaves. The freed slaves

adopted the language and religion of the masters. There is a unique development of the vernacular commonly known as "creole" which is extensively used in these three regional clusters. In a way, "creole" binds the peoples of these three regions and: "... is patently the most cultural index and one of tremendous significance for education. It is also significant in respect of national identity" (Brock, 1984: 161).

### **The Economic Context**

These island and archipelago states are characterised by relatively "open economies" whereby they depend heavily on exchanges with the outside world, often in a narrow range of goods and services. Among these goods should be mentioned those derived from plantation economy i.e sugar, tea, rubber and spices. Tourism is a recent development while manufacturing industries are still in their infancy. The economic setting is, therefore, highly dominated by the plantocracy supported by the labouring class which enjoys generally a low standard of living. Since these states have to depend generally on the European markets and the European Economic Community in particular, for their exports, fluctuations in prices often determine their well-being and poverty. In the Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, unfavourable climatic conditions like cyclones, drought, excessive rain together with the proliferation of a large variety of pests, may ruin the crops, in particular sugarcane. Agricultural diversification in La Martinique, Jamaica, Reunion, Fiji Islands and Vanuatu has led to the production of other commercial crops without guaranteed markets or assured prices. This explains the fragility of the economy as well as its interdependence and dependence with the West European countries.

Education does not determine economic policy though economic fluctuations due to the vagaries of the international market-place may affect educational policies.



The boom period is usually accompanied by an increase in the provision of infrastructure for education and stagnation results during depression.

These countries still depend heavily upon foreign aid to keep their children at school and to support projects. Most of the more usual forms of aid are multilateral, bilateral, technical assistance, non-cash grants, aid grants in cash, tied aid and access privileges to overseas universities.

Aid policies are determined by the social, political, economic, demographic, technological, ecological and legal settings of the recipients. The recipients of aid are many times requested by the aid donors to modify or develop policies to suit aid requirements and aid availability.

The multilaterals like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank have been the pioneers in the field of educational research and have influenced policy-making and policy implementation within the regional clusters. The World Bank's "Education Sector Policy Papers" (1980) is a blueprint for action in developing countries. It has acted as an innovator through the identification of projects, defining sets of priorities and designing procedures on the explicit requirements that activities should focus on social welfare and equity and that benefits should extend to society at large. Special clauses specify that education which is "non-productive" or of a "social-impact" nature should run alongside the productive "economic-impact" activities (World Bank, 1980).

### **The Political Context**

The Westminster parliamentary system of governance is still in vogue in many Caribbean, Indian Ocean and South Pacific states. Similarly the French "Assemblée Nationale" is still a pattern prevailing in the DOMTOM. Some independent and sovereign states like Madagascar, which have a long history of French rule, have

adopted a modified pattern of government with a strong ideological allegiance to super-powers.

Politics must take into account a range of highly charged sentiments and beliefs of different ethnic groups. Such views are a reality and must be accepted as part of a socio-political context. In some cases, administrative matters may be discussed openly as everybody virtually knows everybody else (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985). The governments, too, are closer to the people and the informal communications may be, in some cases, more important than the formal. Nevertheless, geographically and culturally separated islands and fragmented societies cannot be brought closer to the administrative and political system of the nation.

Politics has to take into account the national educational goals like equality of opportunity, meeting manpower needs, self-sufficiency, rural youth unemployment, protection of ethnic minorities and influx of rural population to urban areas and the consequential health and housing issues, nation-building and cultural advancement (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985). It does not suffice to know the needs of people and a will to provide services to help them. "Policy advocates must both understand the political process and be adept at working within it if they are to have a voice in shaping social policy" (Dye, 1983: 18).

## **Conclusion**

It emerges from this review that policy in these three regional clusters of island nations are characterised by the following:

1. commonalities among these nations are discerned in terms of the history of slavery, colonialism, plantation agriculture and indenture labour system that created multi-cultural societies;

2. these nations, although politically independent, are today heavily dependent on the West European markets for their tropical products like sugar;
3. the socioeconomic difficulties faced by these nations have been forcefully brought out in international conferences;
4. the political ideologies of these states and their allegiances to the super-powers affect the nature and extent of financial and professional support available from overseas; and
5. governmental actions in these states are generally conditioned by the environmental contexts which in turn have an impact on the welfare of citizens.

### **A Review of Current Approaches to the Understanding of the Policy Domain in the Three Regional Clusters of Island Countries**

The previous section presented the special characteristics of these developing countries. These characteristics serve as a backdrop for the review of four current approaches that influence the way government works in the policy domain, and these are in turn applied to the three regional clusters of island nations, namely the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. The purpose is to analyse the way in which the approaches have a direct impact on the activities of the government in these selected regions. The advantage of this approach is that it enhances the understanding of the policy activities within a very wide range of countries which are similar in many ways to Mauritius. At the same time, it provides a wider vision of developing countries, the way policy activities are perceived, the question of data and information, their reliability and comparability.

### **The Evolutionary Approach**

The evolutionary approach has developed as a result of influences from the nineteenth century classical works of Comte, Spencer, and particularly that of Darwin's "Origin of Species". This school of thought assumes that society is a living organism undergoing evolution from a microscopic animalcule to a complex organic being, from a primitive stage to a civilised stage. As an analogy, this theory presents the colonies as a symbol of primitive life while the metropolitan powers are civilised. In primitive societies, institutions are regarded as not well-developed and hence unimportant, while in modern ones, they are complex, well-developed and vital for the survival of society.

Consistent with the evolutionary approach, educational changes should be planned and implemented according to the stage of development in society. Changes would occur only when society would move from one stage to the other. This means that in poor societies, with low level development, only minimum level of literacy and numeracy should be sustained. In other words, it means that poor societies should have to wait before their needs for primary, secondary and tertiary education are met. This will inevitably handicap the development process of many developing countries especially in the three regional clusters selected for exploration in this chapter.

But not in all the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific regions has development taken place in a linear sequential pattern as implied in the evolutionary approach. The level of socio-technological, economic, demographic and political evolution has influenced policy-makers who have brought fundamental changes in education. Some countries like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guadeloupe and Cuba of the Caribbean, Mauritius, Seychelles, Comores, Madagascar and Reunion of the Indian Ocean, Fiji Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and La Nouvelle Calédonie of the South Pacific have made substantial progress in education at all levels. Some

have even reached Universal Primary Education (UPE) e.g. Fiji Islands, Mauritius, Reunion, Singapore and Trinidad and Tobago.

This approach fails to consider the ecology, economic organisation and productivity, social structure and its stratification, the manipulation and power in the community and the dependency role of the state.

### **The Utopian and Liberation Approach**

The supporters of the utopian and the liberation approach are Ivan Illich, Everett Reimer, Eric Fromm and Paulo Freire, who made a strong plea for the creation of an ideal and egalitarian society. According to them, poverty cannot be eradicated unless there is a drastic change in the world's economic setting.

According to the utopian and liberation perspective, the current type of formal education "dehumanises" the learner. Schools are created and designed to produce drop-outs, failures, repeaters, unemployed, illiterates and misfits in society. The blame is cast on the educational institutions that are responsible for all the evils of society and hence the need for "de-schooling". This approach also views the school as "dead" and as a pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1972). Instead of schooling, Freire (1972) proposes "new learning webs", "skill exchanges", "reference services" and "dialogue" as new milieus for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values a society needs. Freire (1972: 158) conceives:

. . . the revolutionary process as dialogical cultural action which is prolonged in "cultural revolution" once power is taken. In both stages a serious and profound effort at "conscientizacao" - by means of which men, through a true praxis, leave behind the status of "objects" to assume the status of historical "subjects" - is necessary.

Although this approach received support in the Third World from countries such as Brazil, Cuba and the three regional clusters in general, it was difficult to implement since no alternative to schooling is possible. Problems in education has been approached in a very broad, abstract and idealistic way.

### **The Marxist Approach**

The Marxist model presents two classes: the exploited and the exploiting one. It also visualises an emancipation of society from feudalism to capitalism, through to socialism ending up in communism. This approach assumes that class societies are related to private ownership of the means of production while classless societies are those where the means of production are publicly and collectively owned.

The marxists believe that the capitalist system gears its social, political, economic and educational institutions towards the exploitation of the poor to safeguard the wealth and power of the people who own the capital. Hence there is a need to restructure and eliminate capitalist and imperialist systems. This approach has been unsuccessfully applied to some nations within the three regional clusters. Among them are Cuba, Seychelles, Comores and Madagascar. Educational policies have also not been able to eliminate the differences between the rich and the poor.

### **The Dependency Approach**

The dependency approach is an advanced marxist theory that looks at the relationship that exists among societies insofar as culture, politics, economy and development are concerned. The theory of imperialism developed by Lenin and the theory of colonialism propagated by Mannoni, Menuni and Fanon greatly influenced the thinking behind the dependency approach. This approach emphasizes that the relationship between the development in the metropolis or the core nations and that of the periphery or underdeveloped nations, is an organized and intentional action by the imperialistic nations (Carnoy, 1974; Wallerstein, 1974). The argument is that existing underdevelopment is the result of the despoilment of the Third World natural and human resources by industrialised countries (Gunder, 1967). Thus underdevelopment

is a product of capitalism and not of the inherent backwardness of the people of the Third World.

All three regional clusters are characterised by the dependency approach because they depend upon foreign aid for their development. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the agencies of the United Nations like the United Nations Development Programme, are the major aid donors, assisting them in different sectors, including education. Such aid is considered crucial for the progress and prosperity of these island nations and policies have to be generally conditioned by the relationship between the recipients and the donors.

This model gives an insight into the understanding of dependency between and within nations. It further provides an analytical tool for understanding the dependence of developing countries on the international agencies. This approach is, however, popular among policy-makers who tend to legitimise dependence and interdependence.

The decision-makers are basically similar throughout the world, and the differences stem only from the differences in social and cultural environments, and also in the nature of the aid. This is in essence what Gunder (1969) calls "cultural relativism" that provides an understanding why human beings behave so differently under different conditions.

The ecological, economic, social and political constraints under which the policy-making elite operate make their behaviour characteristically different from that of their counterparts in other societies. Their perception of life, values and attitudes are different. Their behaviour should therefore be studied in terms of the responses they give to the stimuli that they receive from the environment.

## **Analysis**

The exploration of these regional clusters of island countries in this chapter was concerned with three related but distinct aspects. The first was that there was a

need to define the term "developing countries" and its associated theme of "basic needs" so as to situate these countries in context. The second was that there were distinguishing characteristics of these developing countries, and these were reflected in education, that served as a backdrop for policy-makers. These could not be disregarded by them for policy activities did not take place in a vacuum. Most economies in the three regional clusters are rather sensitively adapted to local ecological circumstances. Any attempt to alter these economies and ecosystems, without prior understanding and analysis of their modes of adaptation, would be disastrous. The third was that there were four current approaches that were identified to illustrate the basis of development in developing countries and the manner these in turn influenced the policy domain. These approaches were further applied in general to the three regional clusters of island states of the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific in order to get an insight into the way policy issues were handled and to identify the approach or approaches that were of relevance to the Mauritius setting in particular and to these developing countries in general.

There are three conclusions that are drawn from this exploration. First, the "basic needs" strategy has demonstrated that the priorities of governments in these developing countries are all geared towards the satisfaction of the basic needs of their respective peoples. All policies, whether in agriculture, health or education, have to take into consideration, first, the survival of the community. Second, the special characteristics of these developing countries present a wide range of commonalities, in terms of the physical base, history, society, economy and politics. But the study also reveals the dissimilarities that occur in terms of patterns of government, ideology, the level of economic development and their relationships with foreign countries, including with those that were previously colonial powers, and current international aid agencies. Third, the four current approaches that influence the policy domain reveal that the dependency approach provides an illuminating insight into aspects of



dependence and interdependence that still persist. Foreign aid to these developing countries illustrates the strong cultural traditions and historical bonds that still tie up these developing countries to the developed ones. The dependency approach reinforces the point "that no government is entirely free to shape its policy without regard to external influences. So there is some substance in the concept of global interdependence" (Seer cited in Chinapah, 1979: 141). It has made policy-makers alert to the importance of economic and political relations, and the cultural dependence which in turn shapes the public policy activities. Because aid is such a crucial institutional device that influences the policy domain, it seems worthwhile to add the aid factor to the Hofferbert model identified in Chapter 2 so as to give a wide perspective of the policy activities in developing countries. All other special characteristics of the policy context in developing countries are happily accommodated in the existing model which is refined in Chapter 4 to provide the conceptual framework for the study.

## **Conclusion**

An examination of concepts like "developing country" and "basic needs" has presented a basis for the understanding of major problems facing developing countries. The exploration of the three regional clusters of island nations among developing countries showed, first, that physical, racial-religio-linguistic, social economic and political factors generally influenced the policy domain. Second, the approaches to these developing countries may be considered in terms of:

1. evolutionary: subjected to a historical change;
2. utopian and liberation: the creation of an ideal situation that will improve the traditional pattern of life;
3. marxian: the elimination of differences between the rich and the poor; and
4. dependence: the reliance on foreign aid.

From the above, it emerges that the following factors were predominantly useful in the understanding of the policy domain in small island nations of developing countries:

1. historical and geographical
2. social and economic
3. political
4. dependent i.e on international aid.

All these factors already exist in the Hofferbert model. But it did not present the international aid factor in a convenient and forceful way. It is posited that this factor is both political and economic, and overwhelmingly important in the conditioning of the policy arena in small island nations of developing countries. Consequently, it would be worthwhile to modify the Hofferbert model by the addition of the international aid factor with a view to making it more comprehensive for the study. This means that the modified Hofferbert model will comprise the following factors: historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid, elite behaviour and politically relevant incidents.

## **Chapter 4                      The conceptual framework and research methodology**

This chapter presents the conceptual framework organised and developed from a review in Chapter 2 of models in the policy domain from developed countries, and from a review in Chapter 3 of special characteristics of developing countries that influence public policy. This conceptual framework is essentially the Hofferbert (1974) model modified by the inclusion of International Aid derived from the dependency approach of the three regional clusters of island countries. The modified Hofferbert model comprises two dimensions:

1. historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid that act generally in a developmental sequence and serve as a backdrop to elite behaviour; and
2. politically relevant incidents that have a direct effect on elite behaviour.

The modified Hofferbert model is concerned with the initiation and evolution of single issues. In this case, it guides the study of the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius over a period of eight years.

This chapter also presents the research methodology which is the case study on the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius, and the manner in which the information is gathered and analysed.

### **The Conceptual Framework**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to understand policy and policy related activities through the exploration of the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius. The strategy was to explore all the policy issues related to the Minister's announcement in September 1979 by reconstituting the events between January 1979 and April 1986

through a descriptive-analytical explanation in accordance with the key questions and the conceptual framework. This also involved the identification and analysis of the actions of the key actors, as well as of the vested interests, and a reconstruction of the behaviour of the policy-making elite as it occurred in association with the context in which they functioned. The information is analysed in accordance with the elements of the conceptual framework.

In essence the conceptual framework served two purposes. The first was that it shaped methodology and the second was that it provided a framework for analysis of the information gathered in Mauritius that is presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 respectively, in terms of three broad headings:

1. the Minister's Statement of Intention;
2. the Ministers' (1979, 1982 and 1983) Strategies in the Primary Schooling Reform; and
3. the Minister's (1983) Decisions to Fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform

The conceptual framework is also intended as a guide for future study, providing valuable insights for future educational policy-making activities, particularly in Mauritius and generally, in developing countries.

### **The Choice of a Modification to the Hofferbert Model**

Why is it that not all models from the developed countries, and perspectives and influences on policy-makers from the developing countries as explored in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, are incorporated within the conceptual framework? An answer to this question that deserves consideration is the one suggested by Nelson (1974: 413) who argues that: "A framework . . . that tries to encompass everything will end up effectively encompassing nothing." But at the same time, it is argued by Clay and Schaffer (1984: 193) that a framework should be wide enough to incorporate

the constituent elements that should explain the "... agenda, the data, the construction of problems, the strategies and therapies, the established institutions and experiences of allocation and distribution."

It is therefore evident that the application of all elements from the various models to the case study in Mauritius may not be conducive to focusing effectively on the key activities. This study was an exploration of a particular public sector activity, that being the primary sector of education in Mauritius, and it was advantageous to use only those elements that seem helpful in significant ways in the Mauritius situation. Hofferbert model serves the purpose well. It is clearly worthwhile to add the element of international aid from the dependency approach because international aid plays a critical role in educational development in most developing countries, including Mauritius. Its impact on the policy-making elite is generally regarded as significant in the manner described in Chapter 3.

A second advantage for selecting a modification of the Hofferbert model was that it covered a whole range of public sector activities and indicates the possible influences of the pre-elite elements on the actions of the policy-makers. The exploration of the clusters of Third World island states in Chapter 3 demonstrated the overwhelming importance of the historic-geographic, socioeconomic and political factors that provide the setting in which the policy-makers should function. The modified Hofferbert model thus captures in a comprehensive way all these factors.

A third advantage of this model was that it made provision for the inclusion of the impact of politically relevant incidents on the behaviour of the elite. This was necessary since unexpected events like famine, flood, droughts and epidemics take the people of these developing countries by surprise. Such situations warrant policies that would be exceptional and inconsistent with the usual way government works. This explains why the boundaries of the model as represented by the outlines of the funnel in the modified Hofferbert model are permeable and flexible.

In this case study, the elements of the modified Hofferbert model were handled carefully and in a critical way, taking account of the characteristics of developing countries set out in Chapter 3. This was necessary because the institutional procedures used to get things done and on time were highly complex; the various different devices that were at work, namely, between the multilateral aid donors like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, and the government, also appeared to be complicated.

### **The Modified Hofferbert Model: Its Dimensions and Elements**

The modified Hofferbert model (Figure 4.1) comprises two dimensions. First, there is a set of five elements: historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid and elite behaviour that lead to the formal policy conversion which constitutes the policy output. A premise is that out of these elements, elite behaviour is determined by all in a more or less sequential way and that "Different contexts produce different policies" (Hofferbert, 1974: 23). Second, politically relevant incidents like war and famine that occur unexpectedly, have a direct effect on other events, including the behaviour of the elite. Each of the elements is explained as they will be utilised in the study.

Historic-geographic conditions are concerned with the history and the physical base of the country that shape the various events that happen in it through time. The history of Mauritius is marked by the arrival of colonial powers in a succession: Portuguese, Dutch, French and British, together with the slave trade and indentured labour. This did not happen in a haphazard way but was rather conditioned by the strategic location of the island and its favourable climatic conditions that were conducive to the establishment of plantation agriculture to serve West European markets.

Socioeconomic composition refers to the social structures and economic conditions that have emerged as a result of historic-geographic conditions. The socioeconomic setting of Mauritius is perceived in terms of vested interests that work in close collaboration with, or put pressure on, the formal office-holders in the public policy domain. These vested interests form a significant category of the social structure not only with regard to their status but also in their ever-present influence on the policy-making elite within a small island like Mauritius. It may, however, be possible that the neediest in society is least able to influence the policy agenda.

Economic resources, especially finance, influence the policy-making elite. They also determine the interrelationships of the government with the multilateral aid donors like the UNDP and the World Bank.

Mass political behaviour concerns the vast network of "opinions and actions expressed as political participation" (Hofferbert, 1974: 233 - 234). In this study, the voters bring a change in government which, in turn, appears to respond to the demands of the electorates.

Governmental institutions concerns the basis of government in terms of its constitution, whether democratic or not, legislatures, length of officers' terms, administrative structures and decision-making processes. Within the Mauritius setting, the Ministry and the parastatal bodies like the Mauritius Institute of Education, under its aegis, represented the governmental institutions. The Cabinet of Ministers also formed part of the government. The different Ministers of Education were served by the permanent office-holders who were the officials of the Ministry. It was this interrelationship between the latter and the political elite that would provide part of the framework for understanding of the elite behaviour in this study.

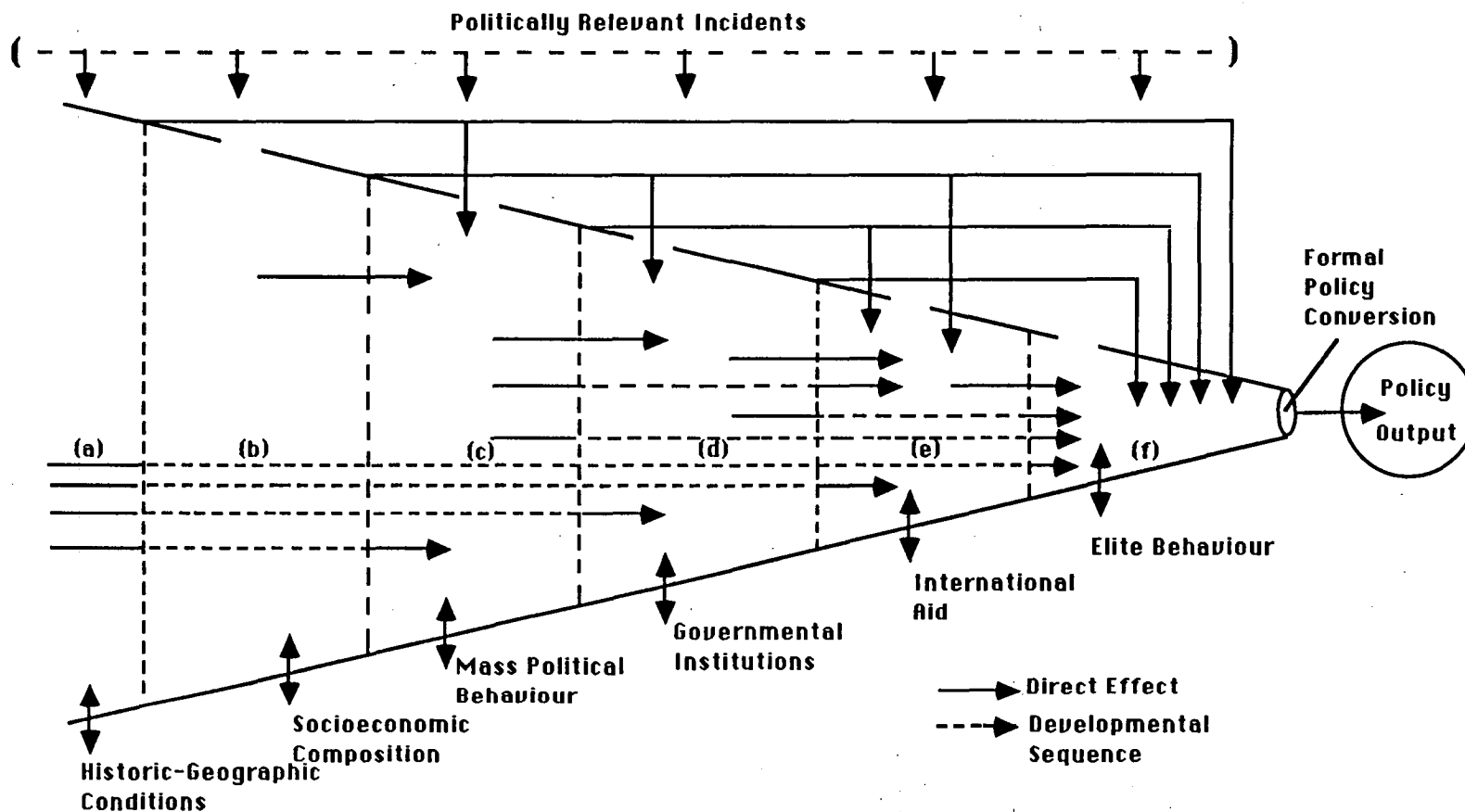


Figure 4.1 The Conceptual Framework: A Modification of the Hofferbert Model



International aid refers to the external assistance made available to developing countries from the developed ones or from international agencies for the purpose of educational development. International aid is an important factor that influences the policy domain in Mauritius and in most developing countries. These have to respond to the demands of donors' philosophy to be a recipient of aid. Once the requirements are fulfilled, the recipients organise their targets to determine their strategies.

Elite behaviour is defined by Hofferbert (1974: 226) as ". . . a fairly small group of people . . . proximate to the process of deciding what is to be public policy at any point of time." Some of these people, he added, might be constitutionally elected, others might be legally constituted formal office-holders and finally the vested interests who participated in the decision-making processes because of their status in the private groups. The elite were characterised by "ideology, leadership and inertia" (Hofferbert, 1974: 227).

According to Hofferbert (1974), the heart of the understanding of the policy domain, including the policy related activities, is elite behaviour. Hofferbert (1974: 228) argued that policies were not made in a vacuum. "Policy-makers are never confronted with a clean slate." He recognised, however, that "any combination of pre-elite factors may be operative on a given policy proposal, but elite response in a formal manner is a sine qua non of policy . . . a 'necessary' condition of policy-making" (Hofferbert, 1974: 230).

The related element of time usually covers a few weeks, months or a few years, encompassing the "gestation and birth . . . evolution" (Hofferbert, 1974: 228) of single issues. In this case, it was the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius that extended over a period of eight years.

Politically Relevant Incidents refers to those events that have a direct bearing on the actions of the elite. Events like flood, famine or war in developing countries have a direct effect on the elite behaviour. Such incidents could be "a momentous

historical condition in the background of current policy-making" (Hofferbert, 1974: 238).

## **Methodology**

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 4.1 served as a guide for collecting, organising and analysing information in an orderly way on the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius. The elements of the conceptual framework, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, were historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid, elite behaviour and politically relevant incidents. The events covered the period, January 1979 to April 1986, in three broad categories:

1. the Minister's Statement of Intention;
2. the Ministers' (1979, 1982 and 1983) Strategies in the Primary Schooling Reform; and
3. The Minister's (1983) Decisions to Fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform

It was important when embarking on the collection of information on the Primary Schooling Reform in accordance with the research questions and the conceptual framework to define a case study as a method of research and determine how appropriate it was for the Mauritius context and how the problems related to reliability and validity can be resolved.

## **The Case Method**

There are a few simple definitions of a case study in the literature of case studies. Adel et al. (1977: 139 -150), for example, stated that: "Case study is an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus an enquiry round an instance." A definition that is relevant in the analysis of

case studies about governments, especially those that were aiming towards realism and significance, was that constructed by Bock (1962: 89):

A case study is a chronological narrative that portrays how one or more persons (usually officials) went about the business of making (or influencing the making of) a government decision; or how they went about carrying out such a decision; or how they sought to deal with a particular problem of government administration.

A different perspective is brought by Stake cited in Timbs (1987: 30) who argues that a case study is a:

... search ... for an understanding of the particular case, in its idiosyncrasy, in its complexity ... (it) tells the story about a bounded system. How are the boundaries of the case set ... they are set by selecting a conceptual framework on which to lay their case.

### **The Significance of the Case Study Approach**

Stake (1978: 5) perceived that case studies were often the preferred method of research especially in the study of human affairs because they were "down-to-earth and attention-holding ... epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and to that person a natural basis for generalisation." The study of human affairs has to be based on the natural powers of people to be able to experience and understand. Such a view is consistent with that of the German philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey (1910), cited by Stake (1978: 5), who perceived that "we understand ourselves and others only when we transfer our own experience into every kind of expression of our own and other people's lives." The case study also provides an insight into the understanding of "where and how public policy originates, how it develops and becomes official, how it is applied or not applied ... Policy is put in context ... "(Waldo, 1962: 48), and helps to identify "a pattern of influences that is too infrequent to be discernible by the more traditional statistical analyses" (Nisbet and Watt, 1987: 76). Finally, the case study "brings to the curious student a sense of human

dimension in the policy-making process . . . balanced by a richness of detail with which individual participant phenomena are portrayed" (Hofferbert, 1974: 94).

### **The Technique**

A review of literature on the technique to be employed in the case study revealed a variety of approaches. Schatzman and Strauss (1973: iv) depicted the case study researcher as a pragmatist, humanist, naturalist, strategist and learner, depending on the changing contextual circumstances. They argued that, as a strategist, the researcher "handles . . . the many real situations . . . and field contingencies . . . emerging from operations - from strategic decisions, instrumental actions and analytical processes."

The premise is that, because "field contingencies" exist, the linear-thinking approach should be modified to suit the researcher's perception of the environment in which he was operating. This point was supported by Nisbet and Watt (1987: 78) who perceived that "It is the context which is often the key to understanding . . . it cannot be ignored, because each context is unique."

Williams et al. (1976: 290) view was that the immediate requirements were not "for methodological breakthroughs but the application of simple techniques with some commonsense". The use of "commonsense" in the adoption of strategies and techniques for the collection of information was a reasonable approach. This was especially so when the researcher was faced with unique situations in Mauritius. Such situations were generally not easy and he had to adopt a reasonable and logical line of thinking, changing the tactics as the circumstances changed. Method was therefore seen by the field researcher "as emerging from operations - from strategic decisions, instrumental actions, and analytical processes - which go on through the entire research enterprise" (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973: 7). Perhaps the most surprising

dictum (though not reflected in this study) is that offered by Jackson (1978), cited by Nisbet and Watt (1987) which stated that "My method was to have no method."

Thus there were multiple perspectives that could be adopted. But Schattschneider (1960) argued that the case study should be a rigorous exercise in which the researcher had to demonstrate a capability of recognising data pertinent to the chosen issues and also decide what questions were worthy of study; one should make observations in the field and get the opportunity to be "apprenticed". At the same time, the researcher should present accounts that would be "responsive . . . illuminative" (Davis cited in Timbs, 1987: 71), and should "focus on the activities of a single person or group . . . even though the focus may shift several or many times during the course of the whole case (Stein et al., 1962: 26).

This exploration of the technique of case studies led to one more important decision, that there was no single method but rather different methods that had to be adhered to because essentially the context was unique and complex. "It is the context which is often the key to understanding effects in education" (Nisbet and Watt, 1987: 78). Thus a multiple perspective method called "triangulation" was desirable:

to respond to the multiplicity of perspectives present in a social situation. All accounts are considered in part to be expressive of the social position of each informant. Case study needs to represent, and represent fairly, these differing and sometimes conflicting viewpoints (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1987: 98).

This case study was intended to provide information about policy and policy related activities encompassing the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius by creating the reality as it exists and which has the widest meaning and significance. Although, truth, reliability and validity in the domain of government are enormously complex and elusive, Fesler (1962: 66) argued that there was a need for sensitive understanding of administration and human behaviour but which would vary from researcher to researcher: "Some researchers are . . . talented, gifted and trained for 'theory

spinning', some for 'sensitive' observation, some for 'meticulous' data gathering and analysis . . . "

Because of the complexity of the bureaucratic and specific situations prevailing in Mauritius, there was no formula that could provide always the right and truthful answer. The researcher in this study had to use his own discretion, his commonsense, his own tactical skills, his sense of dispassionate observation and sensitivity to unravel the hidden agenda that enabled him to determine what Stein et al. (1962: 11) called: ". . . his feeling for what is right - his judgement of what to emphasise, or what to play down - his sense of justice and fair play." The reconstruction of all events pertinent to the study was in important ways impossible because there was inevitably selection among facts and imaginative thinking. Waldo (1962: 52) asserted that conversation could not be "invented" or "imagined" but that the researcher should have a "moral philosophy", "good judgement" and "wisdom" about the "world of flesh and blood people."

### **Triangulation in Case Study**

One technique that was singled out from the review of literature was triangulation (Adelman et al., 1987). This technique was applied to the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius for two reasons. First, triangulation provided a multiplicity of signposts for approaching the complex and unique world in Mauritius. Second, this method provided more than one sort of evidence thus contributing to the validity and reliability of the study.

Before embarking on the collection of information, there was a need for setting up the foundation of the triangulation method as applicable in the Mauritius context. This implied the selection of suitable strategies (Schatzman et al., 1973), through a commonsense approach (Williams, 1976), and through the identification of the right questions (Schattschneider, 1960). The strategy adopted by the researcher in the

understanding of the complex social world of Primary Schooling Reform was to assume four distinct roles, depending on the circumstances:

1. a complete participant,
2. a participant as an observer,
3. an outsider as a participant, and
4. a complete observer

Such an approach was intended to bring the researcher into close contact with the reality and with the feel of the real world, that might be elusive and ever-changing (Stein, 1962; Schatzman et al., 1973). Whatever be the role adopted at specific times, the researcher in this study:

1. thought out what the right questions will be;
2. trialled the questions;
3. used more than one method: formal and informal interviews, documentary evidence and anecdotal evidence;
4. progressively focused around relevant themes: asking the same questions to the same people in different situations; and
5. covered a wide range of respondents to ensure a wide perspective of the Primary Schooling Reform situation in Mauritius.

### **The Procedures in Mauritius**

There were two pre-conditions for embarking on the Primary Schooling Reform. The first was to have official authority and support from the Ministry. This was required to establish the legitimacy of the case study within the Mauritius context and it was accomplished by a discussion on the outline of the study with the Minister (1983) and the Permanent Secretary. The working arrangements were that some sensitive documents of the Ministry would be utilised uniquely for the case study and that the materials drawn from them were clarified by the Ministry's Panel comprising

the Permanent Secretary, the Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education and Mr. Percy Selwyn, Adviser to the Minister, before being incorporated in the research. This procedure was considered necessary in view of the confidential nature of the documents and, at the same time, would help to check any discrepancies or prejudicial information.

Second, it was agreed that the research would be carried out from the office of the Planning and Development Division of the Ministry where the researcher is a Principal Education Officer. Further, it was agreed that the research would in no way affect the work of his Division and would not intrude into the activities of other Divisions and parastatal bodies functioning under the aegis of the Ministry. Figure 4.2 presents the structure of the Ministry that shows the interrelationship of the Ministry with the parastatal bodies. A letter was addressed to all the heads of Divisions of the Ministry and parastatal bodies requesting them to extend all possible assistance and to consider the present research as a national exercise.

The strategy to acquire the information pertinent to the study was two-fold. First, the documents at the Ministry concerning the reform would be examined. Second, the opinions of those who were previously and currently involved in the reform initiatives would be acquired through interviews. Third, the Ministry's Panel was expected to provide support as and when asked by the researcher. The researcher, however, had to assume different roles ranging from an active participant to an observer, according to the changing circumstances, in order to acquire the necessary information. This was considered a reasonable strategy, consistent with "triangulation".

### **The Examination of Documents**

The first task insofar as the Primary Schooling Reform was concerned was to identify and locate the documents that were considered of relevance to the study. This



task provided an entry point in the search of information in accordance with the research questions and the conceptual framework.

In all twenty-five files and twenty-five published documents dealing with the Primary Schooling Reform were located at the Registry and the Documentation Centre of the Ministry respectively. Out of these, only fifteen files and ten documents were selected for the study because they were considered of direct relevance in addressing the research questions in Chapter 1. These authoritative documents were needed for two purposes. First, they provided a primary source of information and second, such information could be cross-checked to ascertain their validity. This was possible because of the easy access to the senior officials and the inspectors who were based at the Ministry and directly involved with the Primary Schooling Reform.

### **The Files**

These fifteen files resting at the Registry of the Ministry were classified under the series ME/ 78/ 13 /12 and dealt with three broad areas of the Primary Schooling Reform as follows:

1. the routine day-to-day administrative procedures,
2. correspondence, and
3. policies

The routinised procedures referred to the day-to-day decisions that were taken by the Ministry's hierarchically structured organisation. This was made up of officers with a status attached to their posts and who are concerned with different issues related to the Primary Schooling Reform. All decisions were generally recorded in the form of minutes, with dates and signature of the person dealing with the file and his status. These decisions were followed right from their conception. Such decisions were regarded as relatively minor although they required the application of the rules of the Ministry.

# MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

MINISTER

PERMANENT SECRETARY

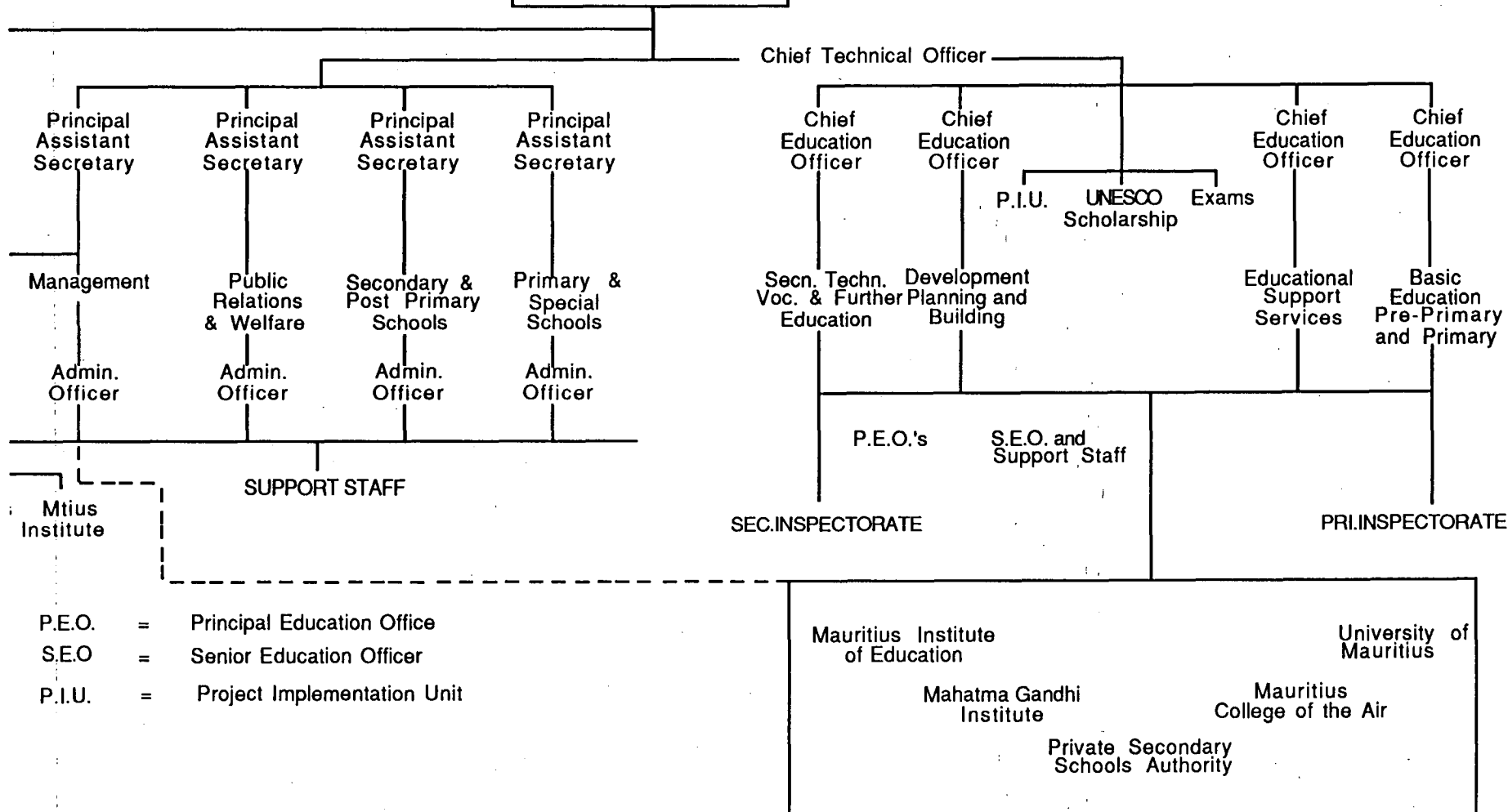


Figure 4.2 The Structure of Ministry of Education (Mauritius)

The Minister might in certain cases require a full picture of the situation and hence a "brief" would be submitted to him. Such a summary might also be required by the Minister for other occasions like a press conference, or for his public speeches, or for his intervention at his Party's Conference. Verbal advice given to the Minister is normally not recorded except when thought absolutely essential for follow up action and guidance. These briefs were studied critically and served as a useful guide for cross-checking the information on files and those expressed in interviews. These briefs also provided an insight into the various probable influences exerting on the Minister.

Correspondence between the Ministry and its outposts like the parastatal bodies, the University and the schools was conducted officially by an exchange of letters duly signed by the responsible officers. The letters dealt with a whole gamut of activities ranging from request for funds to requirements like the transfer of staff to ensure a smooth running of the Primary Schooling Reform.

The Directors of these parastatal bodies also attended the weekly Standing Committee of senior officials chaired by the Minister. The deliberations of the Standing Committee were recorded in the notes of meeting and placed on the file for further action. These minutes provided an illuminating insight into the nature of decisions that were taken in the reform initiatives.

The inspectors played a significant role in linking the schools to the Ministry. They were referred to as "the eyes and the ears of the Minister" in the World Bank Consultancy Report (1981). Their regular inspectorial duties that took them to the schools across the island and their participation in the Primary Schooling Reform put them in a special position from where they could provide the appropriate advice to the schools and to the Ministry.

The correspondence between the inspectors and the Minister revealed the various types of decisions taken by the Ministry which in turn received feed-back from

them. They also revealed a large number of planned activity, development policy and planning.

Liaison with other Ministries like Finance, was effected only when there was a need for the authorisation of the use of funds for the Primary Schooling Reform as prescribed by the financial regulations.

Files on policy matters were those dealing with major decisions such as those reflected in Cabinet Memoranda called CabMemo. These were highly confidential documents and their circulation was restricted. But they were authoritative documents that illustrated what the Government actually did and were useful in understanding the linkages between intentions and outcomes.

The CabMemo were drafts containing proposals on which the Cabinet of Ministers was asked to agree. They were business documents that provided a summary of what Ministers were asked to approve based on the arguments for and against the proposals. Further insight into some of the decisions was provided by informal interviews and anecdotal evidence that were supplemented with information gathered from an exploration of the resource commitments, the organisation of programme of activities and the role of vested interests in the decision-making processes.

### **Published Documents**

The official published documents pertaining to the Primary Schooling Reform that were pertinent to the study were made available from the Documentation Centre of the Ministry. They served two purposes. They were utilised to supplement as well as to cross-check the information gathered from the files.

The exploration of the Primary Schooling Reform was organised in a manner so as to examine the Ministry's documents in accordance with the research questions and the conceptual framework. This approach provided the signposts that represented

the various practices as they occurred in the Mauritius context. The information gathered was significant in two ways. First, it revealed a whole series of policy and policy related activities as well as a variety of institutional strategies and tactics adopted in the reform initiatives. Second, it helped to identify the key actors who were involved with the reform. Thus the review of the Ministry's documents provided the basis for pursuing further the search for other pertinent information from other sources. This was done through interviews. These were considered vital to ensure that the evidence already gathered was of direct relevance and could be cross-checked for its truthfulness and validity. This exercise also provided an insight into what information could be retained and what could be discarded outright. This is what the triangulation method was intended to perform.

### **Questionnaire: Trialling and Adoption**

A first draft of a structured questionnaire on the Primary Schooling Reform based on the research questions and on the elements of the conceptual framework was trialled with six Senior Education Officers and two Principal Inspectors. These were assumed to be the most knowledgeable in the area of primary reform. But this exercise proved difficult, mainly because it created a certain suspicion among them about the implications of giving written answers to questions and they suggested rather informal questions around certain relevant themes. A similar structured questionnaire trialled with two Principal Education Officers also met with similar difficulty. It became evident that the strategy had to be changed. It appeared that the best way to acquire the opinions of the key actors was to talk in an informal way, around key themes like the issues in the reform or the management structures or the perception of teachers in the primary reform.

In such circumstances, the Panel constituted at the Ministry, comprising the Permanent Secretary, the Director of the MIE and Mr. P. Selwyn, Adviser to the

Minister, supported the idea of a informal interview questionnaire (Appendix ). The panel was also instrumental in the identification and selection of the key actors to be interviewed. Their view was based on the documentary evidence already conducted by the researcher and on their experience of the Primary Schooling Reform.

### **The Key Actors**

Based on the information gathered from the documents of the Ministry and on the advice of the Panel, there were two criteria used to select the respondents. The first one was that they should be most knowledgeable of the reform initiatives and second, they should cover a very wide cross-section of the population in terms of ethnicity. Respondents thus represented four major groups: the Franco-Mauritians, African descent, Indo-Mauritians and Sino-Mauritians. It was the decision of the Minister (1979) that there should be an equitable representation in the Primary Schooling Reform of practically all the ethno-religio groups that comprised the multi-cultural society of Mauritius. The respondents selected for the exercise reflected this representation and ensured a very wide range of perceptions. There were 123 key respondents selected for the exercise. Their composition is illustrated in Figure 4.3.

The group ranged from the Prime Minister to parents. The Prime Minister was selected as a respondent because his vision was considered important in the shaping of the future of education in the island. Similarly, the Minister's (1983) opinion was considered valuable because of his direct participation in the Primary Schooling Reform; he was the Chairman of the Curriculum Development Board that was responsible for all matters dealing with policy and policy related activities.

The six Directors of the parastatal bodies were directly involved in the Primary Schooling Reform. They were full-fledged members of the Curriculum Development Board; they were also formerly members of the Steering Committee, an advisory

Politics	Administration	Vested Interests
Prime Minister Minister	Permanent Secretary 6 Senior Officials 6 Directors of Parastatal Bodies 26 Inspectors 20 Headteachers 20 Deputy Headteachers 20 Teachers	20 Parents 2 Trade Unions
Total 2	99	22

Figure 4.3: Respondents in questionnaire survey (N= 123)

committee to the Primary Schooling Reform, and to the Planning and Coordinating Committee. The twenty-six Inspectors, twenty Headteachers, twenty Deputy Headteachers and twenty Teachers drawn from ten different school zones that covered the whole island were the most knowledgeable because they grew up in the primary system and participated directly in the reform movement both at the Curriculum Development Centre and the schools. They were representative of the population in terms of ethnicity and religion. An additional advantage the Inspectors had was that they were the links between the Ministry, the schools and the Curriculum Development Centre. The information gathered from such a vantage point by the Inspectors was significant in two ways. First, it was considered authoritative and provided a valuable insight into the developmental processes of the reform. Second, it revealed vital information on the various non-official decisions that were taken by the Ministry and the MIE. Such information could have remained concealed for ever.

Among the vested interests were the two largest Trade Unions: the Government Teachers' Union and the Hindi Teachers' Union. The former represented the majority of the General Purpose Teachers whereas the latter represented the Oriental Language Teachers. These two were considered to reflect the general view of the teaching force. The twenty parents interviewed were all members of the Federation of the Parents and Teachers Association located in the capital city of Port-Louis. These parents came from different ethnic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds and were aware of the Primary Schooling Reform. Among the parents interviewed were also the President and the Secretary of the Federation who were in constant touch with the Minister. The Federation was widely also regarded as a strong lobbying group and hence capable of influencing the decisions of the Minister.

### **Data Gathering in Mauritius**

As noted earlier, when the Questionnaire (Appendix) on the Primary Schooling Reform was trialled with those who were identified as the most knowledgeable, namely, six Senior Education Officers, two Principal Inspectors and two Principal Education Officers, it was revealed that:

1. these respondents lacked motivation to answer the questions;
2. they were not conversant with this type of exercise; and
3. they would be more at ease with informal interviews.

The Ministry's Panel, set up to support this research, concurred with the above views. After a thorough review of the available data from the documents, the Panel helped the researcher with the selection of the respondents and suggested the limitation of the study only to informal interviews around the key questions. These centred mostly around themes, namely, the Minister's announcement, issues, influences, resources, UNDP, strategies, structures, barriers, consultancies and personal views. These are reflected in the items in the Questionnaire which served as a general guide.



In order to ensure that the study was given national significance, the Permanent Secretary wrote to all the respondents as listed in Figure 4.3, with the exception of the Prime Minister and the Minister (1983). Following this letter, the researcher personally contacted each respondent, and had an initial meeting with each. He met the Prime Minister once and discussed briefly the Primary Schooling Reform. He met the Minister (1983) three times to seek his opinion on the Primary Schooling Reform. As far as the other respondents were concerned, each was met more than once by the researcher. It was made clear that information would be treated confidentially.

The actual answers to the informal interview were not recorded in the presence of the respondents but rather in the office of the researcher. A large part of the information provided was neither orderly nor relevant to the study. It had to be organised according to the purposes of the study. Progressive focussing was followed during interviews by going over the information with alternative questions and a variety of probes.

After the informal interviews, all the data were organised in a comprehensive form and analysed along with that gathered from other sources. The data have been incorporated in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

### **Validity and reliability**

Stake cited in Timbs (1987: 26) argued that "... we cannot provide an index number that indicates the degree to which our findings are valid." A case study is asserted to be valid if it gives an accurate and useful representation of the case in a certain setting, with reference to certain research questions. It is assumed that there is a distinction between 'being valid' and being 'validated'. Stake cited in Timbs (1987: 76), suggested that "to be validated a report needs to be confirmed through other observers, it needs to survive deliberate efforts to disconfirm it, and it needs to be credible." In order to ensure the validity of the interview questionnaire, numerous

drafts of the questionnaire were scrutinized and critiqued by the Ministry's Panel that comprised the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Selwyn and the Director of the MIE. The use of the triangulation technique also helped to ensure the validity of the data under consideration.

According to Kerlinger cited in Tymko (1979: 53), reliability in interviews was achieved when "questions (are) . . . pretested and revised to eliminate ambiguities and inadequate wording." Throughout this study, the use of progressive focusing methods was intended to bring in revision of previous notions. Different members of the Panel interpreted the informal interview questionnaire in the same fashion, thus confirming reliability.

## **Conclusion**

The case study on the Primary Schooling Reform was conducted basically in three ways: (a) by an examination of documents of the Ministry, (b) by holding interviews, and (c) by information provided by the Ministry's Panel. The researcher assumed different roles, depending on the circumstances, and used a multiplicity of methods, referred in the study as "triangulation", in the collection of information. The advantage of this choice was that it enabled the researcher to cover the whole sector of public policy activities concerning the reform in a critical way and in an orderly fashion according to the research questions and the elements of the conceptual framework. This choice also helped to reveal a gamut of decisions and activities that were not overtly visible.

## **Chapter 5**

## **The Minister's statement of intention**

This chapter explores the salient events that transpired in Mauritius education that led the Minister, Sir K. Jagatsingh, to announce on the 9th September 1979 his intention to bring about a Primary Schooling Reform. This declaration of intent was made by the Honourable Minister at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), in the presence of the senior officials of the Ministry and the staff of the MIE. Such a task, he added, would be entrusted to the MIE working in collaboration with the Ministry and other parastatal bodies. This declaration had a political history and the Minister was convinced that he was doing the right thing. Throughout this chapter, the Minister referred to will be Sir K. Jagatsingh.

The period covered in this chapter extends from January 1979 until June 1979 when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) submitted a Project Proposal to the Minister. But this one-year period did not cover some of the crucial events that transpired before January 1979. In fact, the full story of the initiation of the Primary Schooling Reform covers over two centuries. This is beyond the scope of the study. For the purpose of this investigation, it suffices to bring into the limelight only those events that were part of the backdrop to this announcement and hence of significance. It is, therefore, fair to review some of the crucial events that occurred before January 1979.

This declaration of intent by the Minister was isolated from a large number of other decisions that he was currently taking in education that occupied the largest sector of Government both in terms of the number of people involved as well as the budgetary provision made. The selection of this announcement as a focus for study was helpful for three reasons. First, it was useful in identifying the various interests and key actors who participated in this decision. Second, it helped in the understanding of the actions that shaped the key actors' ideas. This involved an examination of the manner in which the Government functioned. Third, the behaviour

of the policy-making elite was unintelligible outside the environmental contexts. The announcement was thus a response to the stimuli from elsewhere.

The procedure adopted, as illustrated in Chapter 4, was first to go to the official documents of the Ministry. This provided a primary source of information and an entry point into the understanding of the environmental contexts, the identification of the key actors, their actions and influences on the various decisions. Second, the key actors were interviewed with a view to finding out what the influences on the Minister's announcement were and how they were perceived by them. This exercise also helped to establish the validity of the information gathered from the Ministry's files and published documents.

The collection of information was done in a descriptive-narrative way, according to the research questions and the elements of the conceptual framework. This served two purposes. First, it ensured an orderly and systematic collection of information pertinent to the study. Second, it provided a framework for the analysis of the information collected. This analysis is presented in Section 2 of this chapter. Thus this chapter is constituted as follows: Section 1 presents the information and Section 2 presents an analysis of the information in accordance with the elements of the modified Hofferbert model.

## **Section 1: Information On The Case Study In Mauritius**

This section presents the events that transpired around the Minister's announcement under four headings:

1. the recent historical background,
2. the critical documents,
3. the intentions,
4. vested interests, and
5. UNDP collaboration

## **1. The Recent Historical Background**

In the previous two decades or so, concern was aroused by the public as a whole about the situation of the primary schooling system in the island, especially in a situation of financial constraints. Chinapah (1979: 21) in his baseline study on primary education in Mauritius, expressed his concern about the "explosion of a wrong type of education . . . is a salient drawback of the country's overall development." However, he perceived that by slow degrees, the policy-makers would be more aware of the qualitative aspects of educational development as well as of the importance of educational planning in the country. That the educational system was not moving in the right direction was repeatedly raised by the Minister on different occasions. The Minister, a parent with a primary school teacher's background, made a serious reflection that "Mauritian children remain our rich human resources, and all the care, affection we show to them also need be translated into practice in our schools" (*The Future in our Hands*, 1979: 12). This concern for "care . . . affection" was a spiritual one and it reflected the Minister's perception of the Mauritius societal expectations.

The first document of significance in relation to education appeared in 1941 entitled "Primary Education in the Colony of Mauritius", commonly called the Ward Report, was written by the then Director of Education in Mauritius. This Report was submitted to the Governor of Mauritius for onward transmission to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for criticisms by its expert advisers. The latter supported most of the recommendations, namely, the creation of a Training College and a reorganisation of the primary sector where unpaid staff would no more be employed and payments to staff would cease to be made by results. But by far the most significant point raised by the Report was the maladjustment that existed between the training available at primary schools and the tasks that pupils had to face after leaving primary school which was the "terminal stage" for most children. This perception did not change through time, and even after Independence (1968), it was the main cause of concern for the community. A similar view was echoed by the

present Director of the MIE (Ramdoyal, 1977: 145) who would still consider the priority to be:

... to transform the old educational system ... into a modern one geared to meet the requirements of a newly independent nation. This defines a need to broaden the educational structure in order to provide students of various aptitudes with an education relevant to the needs of a fast changing society.

Such a cause of concern is also expressed by the World Bank (1985: 5 - 6) that perceived primary education as not being responsive to the changing economic situation and to the evolving requirements of manpower to contribute to national socioeconomic development. It suggested a " shift in emphasis towards a firmer foundation in basic subjects as a means to make the schooling experience more relevant for all children."

A change to such a purely utilitarian approach to education was not always easy. Resources are scarce in Mauritius and the budgetary funds assigned to education in the island have been of the order of fourteen to sixteen per cent. This was one of the highest budgetary commitments for a developing country. It was evident that in a climate of financial austerity, the public wanted a cost-effective use of public funds. There was no improvement in the quality of primary education in terms of new ideas concerning content and method although it was recognised that rapid quantitative expansion had occurred in the primary sector. Opportunity and access were given to over ninety-eight per cent of all the children of the schoolgoing age i.e between five and thirteen years of age, irrespective of class, creed and colour. Such a quantitative expansion was unique for a developing country like Mauritius, where education has never been compulsory at any time at any level.

### **The Education Ordinance No. 39 (1957)**

The Education Ordinance is a document that provides the Minister with the necessary power to bring about changes in his Ministry. It provides the Minister with the framework to ensure: "the progressive development for all classes of the community of practical education suited to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupil and

relevant to the needs of the Colony" (Education Ordinance No 39, Part II). This clause that was transplanted from R.L. Butler's Education Act of 1944 in the United Kingdom to Mauritius, made it mandatory for the Minister, occupying the Education Portfolio, to be responsible for all educational development. But at the same time, the legal framework provided by the Education Ordinance gave immense power to the Minister to manage education. The September announcement of the Minister to reform the primary sector is a reflection of that prerogative.

In early 1990, the Minister (1983) proposed a new Education Act to the Cabinet of Ministers, with significant changes, to enable him to cope with the changing environmental context. Specifically, the law was to provide more extensive powers to the Education Portfolio and also to make Primary Education compulsory for children between the ages of 5 to 13. While the final corrections of this study was being finalised, the Minister planned to set up working parties to look into the implications of the new law, and to propose a public debate on the law before going to Parliament.

### **The Mauritius Constitution Order (1966)**

This document is the guardian of the fundamental democratic rights of the citizens of the island conferred upon Mauritius by Westminster. It is of significance to education because the right to establish schools and the right to have access to them are enshrined in it. In particular, it stipulates that:

(1) No religious denomination and no religious, social, ethnic or cultural association or group shall be prevented from establishing and maintaining schools at its own expense.

(3) No person shall be prevented from sending to any such school a child of whom that person is parent or guardian by reason only that the school is not a school established or maintained by the Government.

It is asserted that the constitutional rights of the Mauritius citizens have rarely been violated and Mauritius has remained a stable democracy. Both the Constitution and the Education Ordinance provide the legal framework within which the Ministerial

Portfolio has to function and are recognised as significant documents that not only guide the government but also preserve the rights and liberties of its citizens.

### **The Development of Education in Mauritius**

The issues related to the implantation of a rigid syllabus and methodology from Britain to Mauritius have often been a cause of concern particularly among the educated citizens. Such a concern is expressed by the present Director of the MIE, Mr. R. Ramdoyal, in a book entitled "The Development of Education in Mauritius (1710 - 1976)". The book reviewed the French period: 1710 to 1810, and the British period: 1810 to 1968, right through Independence in 1968, until 1976. His views reflected his concern for change, quality and equality in education. He had this to say on the history of education:

The first Primary Schools were the outcome of the efforts of Religious Organisations and their missionaries who considered that education would pave the way for Christianity . . . The initial idea of education on purely "literary" lines was so deeply rooted in the Mauritian mind that all attempts towards a practical bias met with an attitude which, if not frankly antagonistic, was characterised by indifference or passive resistance. The result is that it has institutionalised an old fashioned classical curriculum with its academic bias without any practical instruction suitable to the ages and requirements of the majority of the children (Ramdoyal, 1977: 145).

### **The Plans for Socioeconomic Development**

After Independence in 1968, the Labour Government saw education to be the only path that could lead to social upliftment, particularly among the poor. The government brought out two successive development plans that provided the framework for the overall socioeconomic development of the country: (i) 1971 to 1975, and (ii) 1975 to 1980.

The main goals of the first Plan (1971-1975) were equality of opportunity for all its children and a balanced curriculum, including technical subjects and integrated science at all levels. The Plan specified that this could be achieved through ". . . school education (that) is broadbased and prepares young people for vocational



training." Alongside the need for vocational and technical orientation of the educational system, the Plan also stressed the need for democratisation, diversification and "Mauritianisation" of the system in order to provide the children "of various aptitudes with an education relevant to the needs of a fast-changing society." The emphasis was placed on the democratisation of the educational system by spreading out the schools evenly across the country so as to balance the educational facilities between the urban and the rural areas and the diversification of the curricula by bringing them more in line with local needs.

The second Plan (1975 - 1980) focused more on the curriculum that would equip people fully for adult and working life in a fast changing technological world. Its major objective was to introduce diversified curricula in the government as well as private schools and to ensure quantitative and qualitative improvement at all levels of the system.

The increase in expenditure at the primary level was mostly a consequence of provision of more places at school, and therefore more teachers, as a response to the thirst for more education. However, increase in primary education spending did not match the overall performance of children. There was a high drop-out rate, high level of failures and generally very little connection between what was going on within the classroom and the world of work. There was therefore a heavy wastage of resources.

## **2. The Critical Documents**

### **Background**

Two significant events which occurred in Mauritius education after Independence in 1968 were related to politics and education. Politically, the island gained independence from Britain, without any bloodshed, and became an independent sovereign state within the Commonwealth. It also ushered in Sir K. Jagatsingh as the Minister of Education, who would dominate the scene until 1982. Educationally, two documents were published and made public. They were "The Future in Our Hands : Mauritian Education for Today and Tomorrow", by Sir K.

Jagatsingh, and secondly in March, 1979, "The Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Mauritius, Laying the Foundations: Report of the Commission of Enquiry set up by His Excellency the Governor General" was presented to the Government. The latter document is referred to in this study as "Laying the Foundations" and the former document is referred to as "The Future in Our Hands".

These two documents received no publicity when they appeared and were not regarded as important, even at the Ministry. But what had the greatest impact islandwide was the proclamation in December, 1976 of free secondary and university education for all. This announcement was made on television by the then Prime Minister, Sir S. Ramgoolam, two days before the General Elections. This major political decision was meant, as was initially widely believed in Mauritius, to catch the votes. This unexpected move worked well and the Labour Party returned to power.

In early January 1977, education become non-fee paying at all levels and the Minister came to be regarded in the eyes of the public as a highly astute and well-intentioned person. Free secondary education was also perceived by government as a solution to inequality and as a way of satisfying the wishes of the parents. This point is supported by the *Future in our Hands* (1979: 15):

socio-cultural problems are also reflected in the educational system and in a sense many people look to Government and education as a means for rectifying or overcoming the nation's problems and deficiencies . . . Free secondary education became the greatest leveller in society.

### **"The Future in Our Hands"**

The next move for the Minister in the field of education was based on his guiding principles as specified in "The Future in Our Hands" (1979: 7): ". . . when I took over as Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs and today as well as for the next twenty years or so will continue to be the improvement of the quality of Mauritian education."

The concept of "quality" of education was conceived by the Minister as the basis that should underpin all educational development in Mauritius. Quality of education

was also closely tied up with "quality of life" that took also into consideration the cultural aspects of life, namely:

... the necessity of fostering new cultural expression ... promotional of cross cultural integration ... preserving the legacy of the past ... Culture cannot be divorced from education. The development of the sensitivity and sense of beauty of our citizens through drama, fine arts, and dance is contemplated by integrating these disciplines into the school curriculum (White Paper on Cultural Policy, 1984: 1).

The Minister was fully conscious of the colonial inheritance in terms of education, beliefs and values. Education and culture for nation-building and for creating national unity became a permanent challenge. The education policies, the Minister added, were

based upon our single-minded and relentless option to provide for a harmonious development of each and every Mauritian in the context of a delicate fabric of our plural society ... in the spirit of equity, social justice and a greater realisation of the aspirations of the common man (The Future in our Hands, 1979: 1).

The concept of quality was further clarified by the Minister and he related it to the appalling conditions prevailing at school. His idea was generally based on his personal experience as an ex-primary school teacher and as a Minister, having previously occupied the Health and Planning and Development Portfolios. He perceived that:

During the last twenty years, or so, no clear cut and sustained effort has been devoted to review the situation of the primary school teachers, their functions, the atmosphere in the schools, conditions of work as well as the overall administration of schools. Yet primary education continues to absorb a large slice of our human, financial and physical resources (The Future in our Hands, 1979: 7).

At the time when "The Future in Our Hands" appeared, there were nearly 10,000 administrators, advisers, supervisors, headteachers and teachers, and about 2000 ancillary staff, school clerks, caretakers, labourers and others involved in operating this aspect of education. There was also a provision of 270 schools catering

for approximately 135,000 children between the ages of five and thirteen (The Future in Our Hands, 1979: 7).

Long before "The Future in our Hands" was published,

UNESCO has worked with the World Bank in providing Government with basic information and statistics required by the policy-makers to adopt their several options. There have been missions to Mauritius by consultants and staff members from both the Regional Office and Headquarters with the object of contributing to solution of some of the problems inherent in renewal of the system and providing in-country training (The Future in our Hands, 1979: 7).

Further, the UNDP considered "The Future in our Hands" and "Laying the Foundations" to be highly significant works that could serve as models of methodology of reform and innovation. The earlier missions by UNESCO and the World Bank identified some of the broad concepts that government should pay attention to ensure an improvement in the quality of primary education. These concepts were, however, in line with the government's clear-cut vision of education in the year 2000. They were as follows:

. . . Mauritianisation of education, the development of appropriate curricula, the elaboration of teaching materials, the development of a Mauritian system of examinations, elaboration of teacher education and supervision along up-to-date, modern lines, improvement of the status, career prospects of teachers and setting up the necessary machinery for implementation of these changes (The Future in Our Hands, 1979: 7).

The above concepts tallied with the vision of the Minister and he was satisfied that he was pursuing the right direction. In his further search for quality in education, he persuaded government to set up a Technical Committee. This Committee was set up in late 1977 and was represented by a very wide range of people from within and outside education. But it was very strongly represented by teachers, teachers' Unions, the Federation of Civil Service Unions, the Ministry of Finance, the Establishment Division of the Prime Minister's Office and senior officials of the Ministry. The Committee met only once and nothing was heard about it afterwards.

Meanwhile the Minister pursued further in his aspirations to bring about changes in education in general and specifically in the areas of primary education requiring the

improvement of its quality. Some changes which followed included:

1. the Ministry collaborated with Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh, and the British Council, in the conduct of examinations, especially with the view of merging the Junior Scholarship and the Primary School Leaving Certificate (parents had previously strongly condemned the government for conducting two examinations i.e the Junior Scholarship and the PSLC within a lapse time of one month for children at Standard VI);
2. the role of PTA's was more clearly defined and a constant dialogue was maintained;
3. the free distribution of shoes once a year and the continuation of the World Food Programme were reviewed so as to improve the quality;
4. there was a better deployment of graduates in primary and junior technical schools in a useful capacity and it was to be a continuous process;
5. there were concurrent facilities as provided to Mauritius children to Rodrigues children; (Rodrigues is one of the outer islands of Mauritius);
6. the Government embarked on the training of Extra Teaching Assistants at the MCE so as to improve the career prospects of people who had rendered valuable services in education (it was realised that extra Teaching Assistants were needed to reinforce their experience with training);
7. the PSLC examinations were reviewed and the MIE was entrusted with the responsibility for preparing and printing papers for the PSLC examinations; and
8. for a long time books were used only in the classroom and most children could not take them home but now children could and were allowed to take their books home (The Future in Our Hands, 1979: 10).

The Minister's wide experience that shaped his vision was useful in the reorientation of the primary curriculum bringing it in line with the new concepts. He

perceived that:

We inherited a colonial system of education, belief and values, with no sense of real direction and purpose. Education and culture for nation-building and for creating national unity have now become a permanent challenge. Our educational policy in the post-independence phase has been based upon our single-minded and relentless option to provide for a harmonious development of each and every Mauritian in the context of a delicate fabric of our plural society . . . in the spirit of equity, social justice and a greater realisation of the aspirations of the common man (*The Future in our Hands*, 1979: 1).

### **"Laying the Foundations"**

"Laying the Foundations" was the only fully comprehensive presentation of the curriculum situation on the island. The members who formed part of the Commission were Mr. F. Richard, the Director of the MIE and Chairman to the Commission, educators, representatives of unions, religious bodies and parents. The Commission had the following terms of reference:

- (i) to review the scope and functions of primary education including the kindergarten stage in the light of the decision of the Government to provide education at all levels;
- (ii) to assess the need for curricular and administrative reforms of primary schools and the Mauritius College of Education;
- (iii) to consider problems, arising out of the changing needs of the country, of the pupil, of the teacher and of society, having regard to the social, cultural and economic circumstances of the country (*Laying the Foundations*, 1979: Preface).

"Laying the Foundations" offered the view that the schools of an independent country like Mauritius should cease to function with an old curriculum imposed upon her during the colonial days by the British. The guiding principles on which primary education should be based were conceived by this Report as those which would revalue the curriculum periodically

. . . on the basis of its philosophy of life and its level of development: the sort of life it wishes its children to live with its interface of values, skills and attitudes, and since society is man writ large, the sort of man it wishes to create (*Laying the Foundations*, 1979: 45).

"Laying the Foundations" examined the approaches to education. The principles of discovery or inquiry method was hampered because of "ritualistic teaching" (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 40). The Report echoed feelings that were similar to those of Piaget (1970: 51) who perceived:

... if the aim of intellectual training is to form the intelligence rather than to stock the memory, and to produce intellectual explorers rather than mere erudition, then traditional education is manifestly guilty of a grave deficiency.

The schools that were lacking textbooks and learning materials had very little chance of getting anything out of the schools specifically in terms of literacy and numeracy. The Report focused its attention on those things that produced a better teacher "rather than just on a salary increase without further motivation" (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 18).

The Report also identified certain weaknesses that were inherent among teachers. The teachers were very often overburdened and did not have the competence or the initiatives to produce teaching aids that could facilitate the learning of pupils (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 46). The role of the teacher in the context of primary education was too important an agent of education to be overlooked:

There have been innovations everywhere except in the ways in which teachers adjust to the changing times. Instead of participation and dialogue, confrontation has become the rule. This has produced a mosaic of situations difficult to constitute an orderly pattern of Education ... the lack of proper curriculum, the ignorance of teaching objectives, the unavailability of proper textbooks and other learning materials, the sapping and scorn of authority ... grievances and personal conflicts in the running of schools, the sometimes arrogant if not insolent attitude of some people snubbing authority and wanting to be law unto themselves, the inability to adjust to greater parent pressure sometimes not always well advised (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 65).

Other weaknesses identified in the Mauritius educational system were: "Most of the developments in primary education elsewhere have left the Mauritian scene untouched - family grouping, activity methods, integrated day, mixed ability teaching, team teaching, open education (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 66 ).

"Laying the Foundations" devoted a lot of time to the examination of the curriculum and advocated the dropping of formal examinations at all levels except at Standard VI, the adoption of a continuous assessment scheme at Standard III supplemented with a "battery of diagnostic and psycho-pedagogical tests to identify children at risk and slow learners" (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 18); to think more of children than to adults; and to streamline administration along modern concepts of management. It also laid the foundations of the Primary Schooling Reform by recommending the appointment of:

... a Committee to look into the possibility of launching a Curriculum Development Project for the primary schools that would start with laying down the "terminal" as well as stagewise aims and objectives of primary education on which the Project will rest which will then be translated into curriculum objectives and ultimately into learning materials to be trialled in the schools (Laying the Foundations, 1979: 46).

### **3. The Intentions**

The statement of intention of the Minister to go ahead with the Primary Schooling Reform was further shaped by the MIE. This institution was concerned with professional activities. The strategy adopted by this institution, entrusted to launch the reform, was to bring about a model of partnership among all those directly or indirectly concerned with education. The Director of the MIE, at his own initiative, informed the Ministry and the Minister that he was undertaking "a study of the current situation obtaining in the primary schools with a view to determining the objectives of the reform and subsequently drawing up a syllabus and providing the teaching materials to implement the syllabus" (Letter of September, 1979). The letter also stated that he had already involved the MIE to constitute a working group to help formulate a questionnaire that would be submitted to an advisory body called the Steering Committee for its approval, before it was vetted by all the parties concerned. The questionnaire was to be administered on a wide cross-section of the population in order to have their views on the type of reform they were expecting in the primary



sector. This was perceived by the Director of the MIE as crucial in the determination of the objectives and the plan of the reform.

Meanwhile, the Director proposed a model of development that comprised three components: the Steering Committee, Subject Panels and Task Forces

The Steering Committee comprised a group of people drawn from a wide range of institutions and belonging to different ethno-religious groups and unions and was chaired by the Deputy Director of the MIE. This Committee was meant to be responsible for framing policies, supervising and coordinating all activities in connection with the primary reform. The syllabuses based on the approved formulated curriculum would be framed by the subject panels consisting of resource persons drawn from the Steering Committee. Learning materials would be produced by subject panels. Wherever necessary and possible, the learning materials would be tested in schools or just submitted to teachers' scrutiny. Finally, the Director suggested that all recommendations of the Steering Committee regarding the levels at which the production of materials should start and the time schedule for the reform to be completed would be submitted to the Minister.

The Steering Committee met in late September 1979. Agreement was reached that the following areas would be considered initially:

1. subjects already taught,
2. membership on the subject panels, and
3. emerging issues

It was assumed by the Committee that all subjects deserved attention. They were English, French, Arithmetic, Science (Hygiene, Gardening, Nature Study), Geography, Creative Arts (Arts and Crafts, Needlework, Singing), Physical Education, Moral Education (Civics, Religious Education) and the Oriental Languages.

It was agreed in principle that each subject would be represented by a Subject Panel comprising one member from the Curriculum Development Department, one

from the Educational Studies Department and a Subject Specialist from the MIE, one representative from the unions of teachers, headteachers and inspectors.

Four issues were brought for discussion:

1. Moral education: it was felt by members that further details had to be worked out concerning moral education. In a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious country like Mauritius, religious and non-governmental organisations would have to be represented in the design and development of moral education.
2. Oriental education: the MGI, which was legally responsible for Oriental Languages, would be entrusted with the setting up of subject panels. It was also agreed that one or two representatives of the MIE, the Ministry and appropriate teachers' unions would be included.
3. Languages to be utilised in the materials: levels of language competency and the appropriateness of the languages used in the instructional materials would be the concern of the MIE. All teaching subjects except in non-English languages (French and Oriental Studies, Hindi, Telegu, Urdu and Tamil) would be presented entirely in their respective languages.
4. Coordination: to bring about uniformity in the materials and the approaches to different subjects in terms of teaching methodology and use of materials, it was decided to set up a coordinating network between the various subject panels, but no decisions were taken in regard to the manner in which such a coordination would take place.

#### **4. Vested Interests**

When the Parents Teachers' Association became aware of the intention to reform primary education, they wrote to the Director of the MIE in December 1979, expressing their concern about the adverse effects such a reform could have on their children's education. Specifically, the Association sought clarification in regard to the progress achieved so far, the extent of consultation envisaged and the time schedule of

the reform. They were worried principally about the CPE examinations that were the terminal examinations that would streamline the children to their respective high schools according to their grades reached.

The Director of the MIE replied to the President's letter by explaining how the MIE was reconsidering the primary sector and the strategies already adopted in terms of the Steering Committee, Subject Panels and Task Forces. He added that parents would be consulted at all levels of the reform and that there was no cause for any fear. The reform was meant to improve methodology and the content at all levels of the primary schools, and that the Ministry had officially given the MIE the greenlight to go ahead with the reform.

## **5. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

The theme of relevance, quality and equality in education was debated at the May 1980 session of the Executive Board of UNESCO in Paris attended by the Minister. The requirements of Mauritius in primary education were discussed and in June 1980, as a sequel of the May Meeting, the UNDP presented a draft proposal to the Minister that supported his views in principle. The proposal was based on the identification and selection of specific needs of Mauritius in the field of education and where UNDP/UNESCO could contribute substantially through its Third UNDP Country Programme. It supported the collaboration that already existed between Mauritius and the UNDP, specifically with the MIE in the 1970's which

. . . have been years of profound and rapid changes in the education system, with which UNESCO has been associated since 1973 through the establishment of the Mauritius Institute of Education, a professional body charged with the development of a variety of new programmes of curriculum development and teacher training aimed at the diversification, democratisation and mauritianisation of educational content (UNDP Project Proposal, 1980: 1).

In the same Project Proposal (1980: 4), the UNDP cautioned government against an unplanned approach to educational reform. It specified that such a reform initiative ". . . needs more thorough study if the reforms that are envisaged are to be

achieved and that special attention needs to be paid to the improvement of knowledge and skills of primary teachers."

But by far the top priority the UNDP proposed was the establishment of a Ministry's post of educational planner with experience in system development. Meanwhile, it proposed that it could provide the necessary support to the MIE in teacher education, methodology and research.

Insofar as the improvement of the quality of education was concerned, the UNDP expressed its reservations on the way it could be achieved. It raised some knotty issues concerning the adaptation of a critical innovation like "active teaching" method that the Government was thinking of adopting in the primary schools. The UNDP (1980: 3) viewed this approach as "... a complex approach to teaching and learning that places heavy demands on the skill, energy and resourcefulness of classroom teachers and school administrators."

In spite of the scepticism voiced by the UNDP, the government was keen to go ahead with the active teaching method that was generally called a "child-centred" approach as against the traditional "teacher" or "subject-centred". According to the MIE, the neighbouring island, La Reunion, had immense success in child-centred education and that expertise from there could ultimately be tapped. A compromise was reached between government and the UNDP whereby the whole issue related to active-teaching method was tied up with teacher effectiveness.

Should the government move ahead with the active teaching method, the UNDP proposed that teacher effectiveness would improve only if there were:

1. The appointment of a full time Project Director of the curriculum project with the full responsibility for direction and coordination, together with the appointment of a Committee on Improving Teacher Effectiveness in Primary Schools with representation from MCE, MIE, Inspectorate, MCA, MGI, PSSA, Pre-primary Unit, Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, Teachers, Trade Unions and PTA's.

2. The recruitment of three experts in active teaching methods (mathematics and science education, language learning, environmental/social studies). Initially, the project activity would involve a preliminary intensive staff training programme in active teaching methods for teacher-educators and inspectors followed by systematic in-service teacher training for primary teachers carried out through a network of school "demonstration" centre by those already trained.

The approach to international aid here was to present only those characteristics that appear most useful for the examination of collaboration and the manner in which this relationship influenced the Minister. The question was basically to understand at whose instigation the UNDP entered into the decision-making activities and getting involved in the planning of the Primary Schooling Reform. The answer lies in the historical ties with UNDP, followed by the Minister's meeting at UNESCO. UNDP's promise to help in the reform also led to the sharing of common views and initiatives that led to the refinement of the reform. The collaboration could be defined as mutually reinforcing impetuses.

The collaboration was of particular significance over time. It was likely to follow the same pattern as the one provided to the pre-primary sector. It would mean more local participation as time passes but should ensure that the effects of the assistance are felt and targets are met. All initiatives were expected to come from the top although UNDP presumed that, in general, development efforts should be more appropriately matched to the needs and the interests of the people who were served.

Finally, the collaboration would occur on an organised basis for the Ministry was a highly complex organisation, with well-established rules governing its activities. However, the Ministry made provision for formally allowing donors to evaluate the programme of activities and submit their recommendations to the Minister.

## **Section 2: Analysis Of The Case Study In Mauritius**

The purpose of this section is to analyse the events that surrounded the statement by the Minister as presented in Section 1 of this chapter. This analysis is based on two

premises. The first is that the modified Hofferbert model suggests that the historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid and politically relevant incidents influence elite behaviour. This means that the decisions were to be understood in association with the context in which the elite functioned. The second is that all the pre-elite elements need not necessarily act simultaneously. Each element of the modified Hofferbert model is now in turn analysed to identify what its influences were and how it could be understood.

### **Historic-geographic Conditions**

The statement of intention of the Minister to proceed with the Primary Schooling Reform was in response to the historical and geographical conditions of the island. The announcement was a historical event. There is evidence to suggest that the environmental contexts served as a backdrop of the Minister's behaviour.

Historically speaking, as indicated in Chapter 1, Mauritius was influenced by successive waves of immigrants, namely the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British. With them came the African slaves and the Indian labourers under the indenture system. The passage of immigrants from overseas was facilitated by the geographical conditions of the country, namely, its insular tropical climate, which gave rise to tropical sugar plantation culture. The last colonial power to arrive was Britain which transplanted the British system of education replacing the existing French system in the island. The British also brought into the island the Education Ordinance (1957) that was essentially R.L. Butler's Education Act (1944), and the Constitution Order in a written form in 1966. Both these documents had since then served as a framework upon which the government works. These were facts of history and it was confirmed by interviews that the Minister could not ignore them under any circumstances. The Constitution empowered the Minister with the overall responsibility of the Education Portfolio; the Education Ordinance conferred upon him all the power and the authority to provide and develop education according to the age,

ability and aptitude of the child. The announcement of the Minister should be taken in association with this backdrop.

The relationship of Mauritius with the UNDP, the World Bank, Moray House College of Education and the British Council as illustrated in "The Future in our Hands" had a long history. The island continued to maintain its links with the ex-colonial powers and the agencies they supported. The link with the UNDP and the World Bank was not only a historical one but also a cordial one. The UNDP was associated with the creation of the MIE, an institution responsible for teacher education and curriculum reform. It assisted the reform of the lower secondary curriculum reform and helped to strengthen the pre-primary sector.

The language factor was unique in Mauritius. It was also historical and geographical. English and French were brought by the colonial powers while the Oriental Languages were brought by the Indians who came from different parts of the Indian Sub-continent. These languages in the schools were a reflection of the preservation and the promotion of the cultural heritage and had a role to play in all aspects of governmental activities. The deliberations of the Steering Committee and the Sub-committee as well as the responses of a large cross-section of the population to the questionnaire revealed the sensitivity of the language issue within a multi-cultural setting. Even the selection of the personnel on the Committees and the subject panels and task forces demonstrated what the Minister said in "The Future in our Hands" that "culture cannot be divorced from education." Free education (1977) was a historical fact and exemplified the march of the country towards greater equality and justice.

### **Socioeconomic Composition**

The social and economic structures that evolved in the Mauritius setting were an outcome of history and geography. Pluralism was a result of immigration which in turn had an impact on the economy.

The two plans for socioeconomic development illustrated the goals of government which were to enhance the development of primary education by bringing

it in line with modern trends. These plans were a reflection of what the government intended to do. In this case it was the Primary Schooling Reform. These plans were an outcome of a collective process involving different Ministries, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Parliament and they were a product of collective decision as against individual decision-making. The Primary Schooling Reform was perceived by the policy-making elite as most desirable and what the public wanted.

Quality of education was clearly illustrated in "The Future in our Hands" to be closely associated with the "quality of life". This meant that the status of teachers should be raised and the love and care that we show to children, as the Minister said in "The Future in our Hands" should be reflected in what happened at school. The school formed part of the society and could not be dissociated from each other. A similar feeling was echoed in the Ward Report (1941).

The idea of a wider participation in the reform movement meant the involvement of a large number of persons coming from different ethnic groups, with different religions, with differing values, perceptions and expertise. The Minister personally selected the personnel to ensure that the different ethnic groups were represented in the reform initiatives. It appears that these participants in turn also influenced the deliberations of the Steering Committee and the Sub-committee in the areas of Moral education, Oriental languages, and Languages to be utilised in the instructional materials.

### **Mass Political Behaviour**

The period under study was characterised by relative political stability. The Labour Party that was in power since the country gained independence, pursued its tasks to bring about socioeconomic development and nation-building. There was no evidence of any mass political behaviour in terms of voting or referendum. The moment was perceived by the Minister to be appropriate for launching the reform in the primary sector. The elections were far away and the Minister was not running a great risk in case of an unsuccessful experience.



## **Governmental Institutions**

There are two implications of the announcement insofar as the governmental structures are concerned. First, it was a political event. This meant that it was a decision of the government of the day and that such an undertaking by the Minister assumed a responsibility on his part. Second, it was obvious that such a decision would touch the various sectors of the Ministry. It was already established that policy practice involved the use of existing structures like the bureaucracy or the establishment of new structures, the handling of institutions, the institutional allocation of resources and the various decisions that occurred as a response to the environmental contexts.

The Minister was aware that the necessary structures were already available both at the Ministry and the outposts. He was also aware of the maturity of the MIE in the handling of reform in terms of planning, organisation, pooling resources together and relating matters to the Minister. This was already demonstrated by its capacity to handle the lower secondary reform and the UNDP, which assisted the setting up of the MIE, was sympathetic towards this institution. The Minister was also conscious of the support likely to be made available from overseas if the reform was carried out under the aegis of the MIE. "The Future in our Hands" clearly showed that the educational system was marching forward and that changes were inevitable.

It is argued here that the behaviour of another Minister in the same position would have been similar. He knew a lot about the system he was dealing with, including its complexity before undertaking any course of action. He assessed the positive and negative features of the system with its interrelated structures and behaviours as they would affect his attempt to satisfy a demand of the society in which he lived. Finally, he judged the impact of the reform on the government and the way it would project his image in the public.

Thus the development of policy could not be understood without an understanding of the institutional factors like the MIE which had the task to translate

the Minister's intentions. The selection of the MIE to launch the Primary Schooling Reform by the Minister clearly demonstrated that the Minister recognised the significance of this institution.

### **International Aid**

Historically, the education sector of Mauritius was a recipient of aid from overseas international agencies since Independence in 1968. The World Health Organisation had long since assisted the School Feeding Project that supplied food for children in the primary schools. Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh assisted the Government in the conduct of public examinations. But the most significant aid is the one provided by the UNDP and the World Bank to support the Primary Schooling Reform.

The UNDP was an authoritative institution that provided the Minister with advice based on research. The results of the research served two purposes. First, they provided the Minister with basic, objective information which helped shape options. Second, they identified the broad concepts within the primary sector, including the options from which a choice could be made. The UNDP project proposal that emerged from the May meeting of the Minister at UNESCO showed the real priorities at that time. It also showed the tendency of the UNDP to restrict itself to certain areas like teacher effectiveness and educational planning.

The UNDP proposal demonstrated that there was a need to enhance the quality of primary education in Mauritius and that it was prepared to support such an enterprise. Such support had two implications. First, it meant that the resources required for the reform would fall short of the mark and the UNDP's assistance would be vital. Second, it meant that there were no other alternatives to the UNDP's proposal. There is no evidence of any objection raised against the findings of the UNESCO missions by the Mauritius counterpart, and the Minister perceived the view of the UNDP to be reasonable. UNDP's assistance was required to fulfil the goals of government and satisfy the aspirations of the common man.

The UNDP successfully brought about a change from its earlier concerns with the setting up of the MIE, as illustrated in the UNDP Project Proposal (1980), to a concern with the improvement of the quality of the primary sector. The record of change showed that the philosophy of the UNDP was not merely providing information and identifying the weaknesses in the system, but reinforcing the Minister's intention to improve the primary schooling system that was equal to improving the quality of life.

The Minister's announcement was believed to be based on the premise that the UNDP would support the reform. The latter had already shown its resourcefulness by assisting the creation of the MIE, the reform of the Lower Secondary Curriculum and the strengthening of the pre-primary sector. Outside aid was perceived by the Minister to be necessary to improve the knowledge and the skills of teachers and also to keep them highly motivated and satisfied. Although the UNDP warned the government against going too fast with the reform movement and against the adoption of the active-teaching method that was too difficult for teachers to adopt, it suggested that the final decision was that of government.

Before embarking on firm proposals for assisting the Primary Schooling Reform, the UNDP submitted two proposals. The first concerned the appointment of a full-fledged educational planner with experience in system planning, to be posted at the Ministry. The second was the appointment of a Director for the Primary Schooling Reform. The two posts were perceived by the UNDP to be crucial not only for the success of the reform, but also for Mauritius to qualify as an aid recipient. After all, aid had to be utilised in a cost-effective way. Resources were scarce and it went without saying that they had to be utilised exclusively for the purpose of the reform in accordance with the agreement to be eventually signed.

Such assistance by the UNDP had two implications. First, that government policies or intentions should be in line with UNDP's proposal. This was achieved through dialogue with the Minister in which there was a search for consensus. Second, it was the responsibility of the government to see that targets were met. Such

a concurrence in agreement meant a heavy commitment on the part of the government especially in the handling of the aid: its strategies, distribution of resources and adaptation in the light of unexpected changes in the contexts. However, provision was made as usual for the UNDP to make its assessment of the progress achieved and to submit its recommendations to the Minister.

### **Elite Behaviour**

The period under review unfurls the central actors and their interests in the Primary Schooling Reform. It also provided an insight in regard to the influences upon them from the surrounding society. It was revealed that the principal actors comprised essentially the Minister, the key actor, who declared his intentions, and the Director of the MIE who captured and endeavoured to translate the Minister's intentions into programmes of action. From the interviews with the Director, it is confirmed that he was the major source of advice for the Minister and that he probably had a considerable influence upon him.

The Minister was regarded as one of the most powerful, intelligent and refined politicians by virtue of his long career as a politician, and as a Minister in different Ministries at different times. Besides, he was the Secretary General of the ruling Labour Party for twenty-five years and had a tremendous influence on the then Prime Minister. He was a primary schoolteacher prior to entering politics. He knew the history of the island well. He was imaginative, strategy-oriented and determined to succeed in his endeavours to place education at the centre of all development. This was reflected in the vast changes, the major one being free education, that he brought to education since he occupied the Education Portfolio.

The arena of decision-making in the Primary Schooling Reform was a privilege for a few. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the decision-making elite, namely the Minister and the Director, were responding to the wishes and the aspirations of the people. "The Future in our Hands", "Laying the Foundations" and the National Plans were historic documents and they directly influenced the Minister.

The influence of the UNDP upon the Minister can be illustrated in two ways. First, the UNDP presented the Minister with the significant problems based on research, requiring attention. Second, it was prepared to assist with the proviso that the terms and conditions of the donor were fulfilled. It is argued that the problem-solving approach presented by the UNDP to the Minister reinforced his conviction to pursue his idea of reform with vigour. It is therefore asserted that the announcement of the Minister was, to a large extent, bound up with the UNDP's aid.

### **Politically Relevant Incidents**

Three events of political significance were, first, the proclamation of free secondary and university education in December 1976 and which was implemented in January 1977. This event marked a turning point in the history of education and social development in Mauritius. "The Future in our Hands" brought out how it marked a further democratisation of education, greater social justice and represented the first fruits of Independence. Such a change also meant socioeconomic betterment and a change from the colonial and alien rule to local rule but with economic links with the ex-colonial power. It also meant the preservation of its cultural ethos by promoting, preserving and sharing the cultural heritage with a larger schooling population. This unique event proved to be a pre-condition for further educational and cultural development and is asserted to have significantly influenced the Minister who was conscious of the societal needs as he indicated in "The Future in our Hands" (1979: 1).

The second event of political significance was the publication of the critical documents, namely "The Future in our Hands" and "Laying the Foundations". The third event was the announcement by the Minister to launch the Primary Schooling Reform. This was a political decision and of immense socioeconomic and political significance, since it meant a major change in government's policy. These three events were political in nature and provided the context for further changes in education

particularly in a climate of sustained cordial relationship between the Minister and the UNDP.

## **Conclusion**

What emerged from the analysis is presented in Figure 5.1. There are two major implications of this analysis. First, the elite comprised the Minister and the Director of the MIE. Second, it reveals that elite behaviour is best understood in the context of historic-geographic conditions. The relationship between the Minister, the Director of the MIE and the UNDP were all significant historically. Such a relationship could be explained only in terms of the adaptation of the Minister to the personnel, the aid donor, the schools and the society around him. The society to which his announcement was addressed was an evolutionary type, shifting all the time, a socioeconomic system composed of different ethnic groups and vested interests, different from those that came before, and those that are supplanting them. It is therefore argued here that the behaviour of the Minister had to be judged in relation to the known past and the expected future. The character of the present is relative to the immediate past and unintelligible without the knowledge of the past. His links with the UNDP, the encouragement of earlier events like the publication of "The Future in our Hands" and "Laying the Foundations" and the politically stable climate all influenced his actions.

It is therefore asserted that behind the facade of the announcement lay the strategist who was seeking to bring about improvement in the primary sector without destroying the whole system, and despite the constraints imposed by the environment. The change in his behaviour, his attitudes and his beliefs could and should come only after some changes in the circumstances. At the same time, it is assumed that his decision-making strategies took into consideration the risks and the consequences of failure, particularly in relation to the "active teaching methods". This involved responsibilities towards the society in which he lived. It is therefore reasonable to say that the Minister's behaviour was a rational response to the complex and difficult

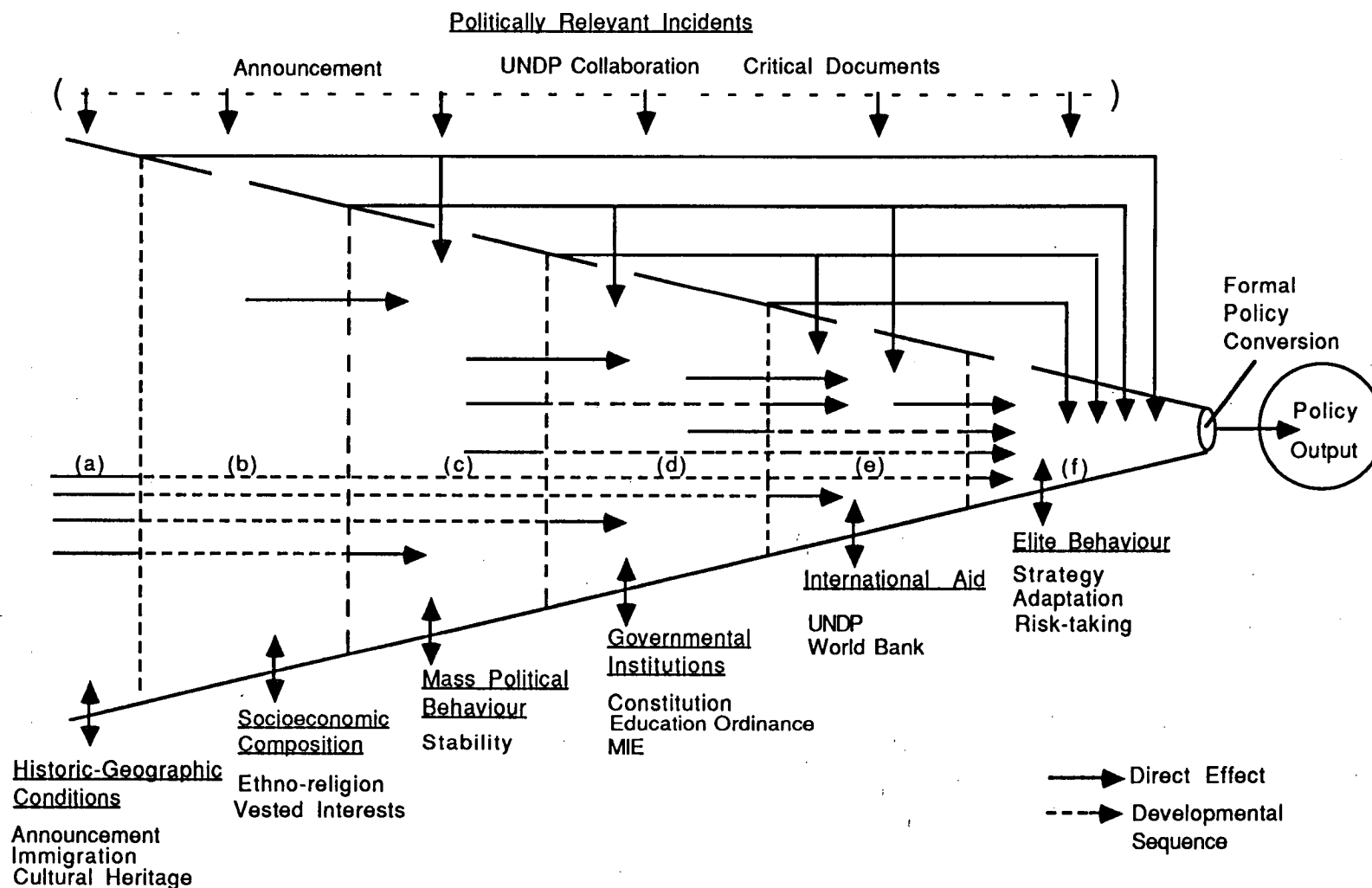


Figure 5.1 The Contexts of the Elite Behaviour in Mauritius (1979)

situations prevailing in the schools where the status of teachers had gone down as illustrated in "The Future in our Hands", and to the demands of society. Political activities made no sense without the awareness of the environmental contexts.



## **Chapter 6                      The Ministers' strategies in the primary schooling reform**

This chapter investigates the various events that occurred from the time the the UNDP submitted its project proposal to the Minister (1979) until the signing of the Project Agreement between Government and the UNDP in October 1983. This period covered the involvement of three Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983). Section 1 presents the information that was gathered from documents of the Ministry and interviews as outlined in Chapter 4; Section 2 presents an analysis of the information according to the modified Hofferbert model. The change in government twice during this period was a major event of political significance and gives an insight into the influences conditioning the actions of the elite.

### **Section 1: Information on the case study in Mauritius**

This section presents the information on the Primary Schooling Reform under the following headings:

1. review of the Primary Schooling Reform,
2. new directions,
3. vested interests,
4. general elections, and
5. UNDP collaboration

#### **1. Review of the Primary Schooling Reform**

In order to pursue its activities further as charted in the September 1979 letter to the Minister (1979), the Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) convened the Steering Committee in early May 1980 at the MIE under his chairmanship to review progress, consider proposals and make recommendations to

the Minister for future action in the reform initiatives. It became clear at the meeting that the reform had to commence at a certain level. The proposal was to start at the pre-primary level, a strategy that was not yet fully discussed with the Minister or the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The reasons for starting at this level were two-fold. First, since the pre-primary sector that covered children between the ages of three to five, was already undergoing a change in terms of methodology, infrastructure and teacher education, and receiving special attention by the Minister and substantially supported by the UNDP, the members were of the view that the strategy should be to start the reform at the pre-primary level and then move on to the primary level. This shift of emphasis from the primary sector to the pre-primary sector was considered reasonable. Accordingly, a Sub-committee was constituted to consider how the integrated approach based on infant methodology could be adopted for teaching various skills in Standards I and II (these refer to classes in the primary schools - Standard I is the entry point of children at the age of 5 plus and every year they automatically move to the next higher class until they reach Standard VI, commonly called the CPE) based on experience acquired from the three to five age group of the pre-primary sector.

The Sub-committee was composed of those who were already involved with the strengthening of the pre-primary sector and a whole range of teachers and parents from different racio-religious groups. It was thought necessary to have a wide representation because educational reform as a national issue could benefit from dialogue and could provide the people with what is best.

The Sub-committee met five times at the MIE. The first three meetings were concerned with a general review of the current situation in the schools and, specifically, with the examination of various approaches to infant methodology in Standards I and II. The last two meetings were concerned with the clarification, finalisation and presentation of recommendations to the Steering Committee for further

consideration. The broad areas that were reviewed were children and classroom; teachers and training; and parents and their attitudes. The main recommendation was that the reform strategy should be geared towards "an experimental project" involving ten to fifteen primary schools to which a pre-school unit was or would be attached. It was desirable to explore and research ways and means of introducing an integrated, child-centred approach at Standard I and II. There should, however, be no attempt to bring about far-reaching changes in the curriculum, content and methodology at Standards I and II, but it was thought desirable to give a new direction to the curriculum by gradually building up from the existing one so as to meet the needs of the child growing up in a fast changing society. The aim was that such experimentation would reduce wastage at the primary level i.e. reduce drop-outs and failures chiefly among children from economically and culturally deprived backgrounds. At the same time it would upgrade teachers' skill and bring about curriculum redevelopment.

The problems faced by the Sub-committee were not simple. It perceived that:

For approximately two-thirds of them all they are concerned with is that their child should read and write at the earliest possible. For another thirty per cent who are more literate they are not yet too sure that "active methods" are preferable to "traditional methods" (File No. ME/78/13/12: May 1980).

Children who entered primary schools were in the age range five to six years and generally did not receive any form of stimulation in pre-school units. These children were socio-economically and linguistically different from each other.

The Sub-committee was aware of its limitations and considered the approval of the Minister most crucial. Approval by the Minister of the following was considered desirable:

1. headteachers, inspectors and parents should be sensitized to ensure a sense of involvement and commitment to the reform;
2. the first pilot schools selected should reflect the Mauritius community;

3. classroom accommodation should be modified and upgraded with appropriate furniture and equipment;
4. the reform should be linked with the UNDP assisted Mauritius Pre-primary Education Project aimed at strengthening the pre-school education in the island; and
5. the Ministry should officially support the plan of action and signify its firm commitment in terms of personnel and finance.

The Sub-committee proposed that its recommendations could be incorporated within the Project Document aimed at redeveloping the curriculum for Standards I and II. It also suggested the need to apply caution against hasty decisions that might adversely affect the children and the community in general. It was therefore necessary that: "Further research should be undertaken on pre-school education methods to assess the ways in which these should be projected or adapted for children entering primary school before coming up with firm proposals for a curriculum reform" (Notes of Meeting, May 1980).

The major areas that were identified for further exploration and research were:

1. the classroom with children aged five to six years, specifically equipment and material;
2. the teacher in charge, his or her training and qualification;
3. parental attitudes to present curricula and their views on any further reform;
4. teacher trainers; and
5. centralised and decentralised administration.

The recommendations of the Sub-committee required further investigation into the subjects taught at the primary level. These subjects were English, French, Arithmetic, Science, Geography and Oriental languages that were taught since the colonial days. The major recommendations were, first, that Deputy Headteachers

should be released as and when required to play a more active part in the reform initiatives. Second, arithmetic was the first subject that deserved immediate attention because it was the least controversial and there was less likelihood of any protest from parents.

The mathematics subject panel that pursued the matter further set up strategies to tackle this subject. The plan was to select 25 to 30 primary school teachers and equip them with the rudiments in primary mathematics so that they would serve as resource personnel that would assist the subject panel with the development of teaching materials and teaching aids. But the Ministry was not prepared to release such a large number of teachers and took a stand on staff release. Not until February 1981 did the Minister personally approve the release of the required staff. The Minister also approved the appointment of a Coordinator of the Primary Schooling Reform.

It appeared that the Minister was moving cautiously, particularly in the selection of the personnel and that all decisions would be taken by him for the time being. The Director of the MIE maintained a close liaison with the Minister before he continued with the reform.

## **2. New Directions - Working Paper**

Based on the findings of the Steering Committee and the Sub-Committee and upon agreement with the Minister, a comprehensive Working Paper was prepared by the Steering Committee, charting the new directions that the reform should take. The Paper reiterated the primary classroom realities: large classes with largely untrained and unmotivated teachers dealing with curriculum areas that did not fully articulate with one another. It stressed that: "Teachers required more guidance of what would go in the classroom, in particular, the principles of spontaneity, curiosity, creativity and active experience" (Working Paper, February 1981). It also made a strong plea for the school activities to be as free as possible and to ensure that language acquisition did

not fall short of what was expected of children of that age. It recognised the limitations of the Steering Committee and urged that all matters dealing with policies should be dealt with the Minister as a matter of urgency. It further recommended the appointment of a high official of the Ministry who would ensure coordination, implementation and dissemination of the reform and assume "... the concomitant responsibilities of the Ministry thus ensuring a smooth and harmonious implementation of the reform initiative" (Notes of Meeting, March 1981).

Finally, the Paper summed up that everything should be done

... that will help the child to understand himself, to relate to others, to be exposed to the cultural environment of others, to promote mutual acceptance, to develop habits and values of importance to society, to explore the environment, to achieve reasonable confidence and fluency in speech, to build up a satisfactory self-concept (Notes of Meeting, March 1981).

### **3. Vested Interests**

As the reform was gaining momentum, the Government Teachers' Union (GTU), the largest primary schools' teachers union, expressed its concern regarding the impact of the reform on its members, in a letter of 18 April 1981 to the Minister and to the Director of the MIE. The Director thanked the Union and expressed his wish to have a continuing dialogue with them. Further, he explained to them how the Institute had already gone a long way since the beginning of the year to initiate action that was in the general directions of the suggestions contained in their letter and that

the Institute together with the other bodies, institutions, resource personnel involved in the Reform, is fully aware of the many difficulties and limitations in steering a reform of such dimension through and it is doing everything in its power to prepare the way for successful implementation (Letter from the MIE to the GTU, April 1981).

The Director assured the GTU that inspectors, headmasters and teachers were directly involved in the reform movement and they would be called upon to play an

increasingly important role along with personnel from other institutions. He further explained that: "We are still at the pre-implementation stage and we see the six years of the primary as an integral whole and not cut up into two distinct segments," as proposed by the GTU.

The Director informed them further about the panels that were at work, examining classroom experiences and other activities, so as to ensure a smooth progression from Standards II and III. Thus the whole reform adopted a "holistic" view from the beginning. The Director warned the Union that it would be unrealistic to expect ideal conditions to prevail during implementation. But he perceived that a great deal could be done to improve the quality of education at the primary level despite the constraints imposed by class size, lack of funds and insufficient teacher preparation, but only if the Union could assume its responsibility and collaborate in the reform.

The GTU offered no resistance to the reform movement. They were conscious that the Government was already committed to the improvement of the quality of education despite the constraints imposed by personnel and funds.

#### **4. The General Elections**

The announcement of the General Elections in the island, scheduled for the 11 June 1982, brought the reform movement to a standstill. This view was reflected in a minute of the Chief Education Officer, responsible for the Primary sector, addressed to the Permanent Secretary:

... we have, in fact, reached a very critical stage on the Curriculum Reform in Primary Schools. . . it has now come to a standstill and teachers are falling back on the traditional syllabus much to the detriment of the pupils . . . we cannot meet this owing to financial constraints . . . I suggest some patchwork for the benefit of the children.

But no meeting was held with the users of the curriculum because of the election fever!

The General Elections were held on the 11 June, 1982 and the Minister lost his seat, and the Labour Party he had served as Secretary General was completely routed, not holding a single seat. The Mouvement Militant Mauricien, commonly called the MMM in alliance with the party called Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (MSM), won a landslide victory. Hon. A. Jugnauth became the new Prime Minister and Hon. R. Jadoo, an ex-private secondary school teacher, and a staunch member of the MMM, was sworn in as the Minister of Education. Permanent Secretaries were reshuffled. Three Permanent Secretaries were forced to retire and the new government was determined to establish order and inflict heavy cuts in education.

In view of the changes in the political scene, the Director of the MIE wrote on 20 August 1982 for the first time to the Minister (1982), expressing his concern about the ongoing reform and particularly "it is important for us to know the views of the Ministry of Education, . . . whether financial provision had been made . . ." The Director reiterated the commitments of his predecessor and urged his support. He raised five major issues facing the reform. They were finance, the phasing of the reform, the language policy, the conscientisation of the parents and the appointment of a coordinator from the Ministry to liaise between the Ministry and the MIE.

The Ministry was of the view that no appropriate budgetary provisions could be made at that time because of financial austerity and that the MIE would have to find its own way in financial matters. This presented the MIE with a serious problem. Materials for writing were lacking and targets were not met. It was proposed that activities related to the reform be temporarily "frozen" until finance was available. But pressure from the users of the curriculum, namely, the teachers, deputy headteachers, headteachers and the inspectors, pressed the Minister to support the reform. The outcome was that only children in Standards I and II would be involved



in the new studies. This was how the Minister perceived the situation and the future of the reform looked unpromising.

In early March 1983, the hard core members of the MMM party resigned from the Parliament because it was widely perceived on the island that the economic situation was not improving. The Prime Minister, Hon. A. Jugnauth, who did not resign, rounded up all those who continued to sit in the Parliament and formed a new Cabinet of Ministers. In July, upon the advice of the Prime Minister, the Governor General dissolved the Parliament and set up a caretaker Government until the 20 August 1983 when the General Elections were held and Hon. A. Jugnauth won a landslide victory. He became Prime Minister and Hon. A. Parsooraman, an ex-private secondary school teacher, was sworn in as the Minister of Education.

With the change to a Government which had rightist tendencies, particularly with a new Minister (1983), it became evident that fresh guidelines had to be received from the Minister. The intention of the Minister was made evident when the Primary Project Document underlying the assistance agreement between Mauritius and the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) was signed in October 1983. This document was

expected to be the basic management plan regarding the provision of inputs throughout the Project life-time, serving the day-to-day management requirements and constituting the theoretical framework for evaluation purposes (File No. ME/78/13/12: October 1983).

The UNDP agreed to contribute a reform Budget to cover:

1. experts and consultants,
2. teacher training and pupils assessment,
3. assessment and evaluation, and
4. fellowships.

Before the Project Document between government and UNDP was signed in October 1983, the government made arrangements with the World Bank and secured a substantial provision of financial assistance from the Second World Bank Education Assisted Project for Mauritius for the years 1983 to 1985 for the domestic procurement of printing raw materials. The Project Document specified that:

The Primary Schooling Reform is a remarkable venture in the sense that this is the first attempt to look at the whole curriculum of primary schools. Previously developments had taken place in separate subject areas like Mathematics. Located at the MIE, the Project could draw on the experience of the forms I to III curriculum at lower secondary level - both its successes and failures (File No. ME/78/13/12: October 1983).

## **5. UNDP Collaboration**

The signature of the Project Document between the government and the UNDP is of particular significance over time and it followed the same pattern as the one provided for the strengthening of the pre-primary sector. The attempt here is to present in greater depth only those characteristics that illustrate the nature of the collaboration and the way the UNDP influenced the major decision-making activities and getting involved in the actual planning of the Primary Schooling Reform. There were two significant implications of this collaboration. First, it was recognised that the initiative was shared between the government and the UNDP but with a very high level of involvement by the MIE. Second, the collaboration occurred on an organised basis with well-defined roles of the Ministry.

Assistance was requested for the provision of:

1. advisers in "active teaching" methods,
2. scholarships for training of Mauritius staff, and
3. paper for production of books

The signed Project Document presented a comprehensive review of the ongoing activities in the area of curriculum reform at the primary level and the

curriculum situation on the island. It was refined with the active participation of the UNDP and its meetings with the Minister. These activities are briefly outlined below.

In developing the plan of the Project, the MIE had taken into account the recommendations of Dr. J.W. Greig, Director of Continuing Education and Studies, University of Toronto, who was in Mauritius in January 1980 on a UNESCO mission. One major recommendation of the consultant that generated a great deal of interest among curriculum developers was the use of "active teaching" methods, particularly in the early stages of the primary cycle (Standards I and II).

The agreement reached between both parties was:

... to have a fresh look at Primary Education into sharper focus, ... but also to view structural or curriculum reform in the continuum of the total educational process: pre-primary, primary, secondary, University and continuing education (File No. ME/ 78/13/12: July 1983).

The Project Document reiterated the recommendations of "Laying the Foundations" that was aimed at improving the quality of education at the primary level. It specifically:

... emphasized the need to review and reform the curriculum to bring it in line with modern educational thinking, and with the needs of Mauritius. This new curriculum would essentially cater for the following areas of development and experience; intellectual, social, emotional, personal, physical, aesthetic, spiritual/ moral/religious (File No. ME/ 78/13/12: July 1983).

The Project was designed to assist the Ministry to provide learning experiences appropriate to children in the primary age group and more relevant to the Mauritius situation. It also aimed at minimising wastage by building in diagnostic tests and reinforcements for slow learners. These were all in line with the philosophy of the UNDP.

The Project's intent was to:

1. develop a programme of studies for Standards I to VI;
2. design instructional materials;

3. conduct refresher courses for teachers, and workshops for inspectors, headteachers, deputy headteachers; and
4. design evaluation instruments for use in schools to measure achievement and diagnose learning problems.

The Project Document further explained the working modalities aimed at shaping the policy of reform in the primary sector.

From the very inception of the Project, the MIE discarded the ivory-tower approach and developed appropriate mechanisms whereby a wider participation could be ensured. It carried out a survey in 1979, prior to the launching of the reform, among teachers, parents and institutions concerned with education to define the objectives of primary education in Mauritius. The information thus compiled was analysed and formed the basis for the development of the curriculum reform. Thus from the very outset, the opinions and feelings of those most directly concerned had more or less been taken into account.

With regard to the overall planning, policy-making and monitoring of the Project, the same basic concept of wide participation had prevailed. These functions were carried out by the Steering Committee which comprised representatives of the teachers and headteachers Unions, the MGI, the Ministry, the MIE and other interested parties.

This broad-based approach was also applied to the implementation of the Project. The task of actually writing the curriculum materials was being carried out by panels and task forces consisting of primary school teachers, head teachers, inspectors and appropriate specialists from the MIE and other institutions.

The Project also mentioned the key personnel such as the appointment of a Coordinator from the Ministry to be responsible for providing the link between the Ministry and the MIE, and an Evaluator from the MIE. The Project specified the various tasks as follows:

The various panels and task forces have been working on defining the boundaries of their subjects in terms of content and structure taking into account the aims and objectives . . . The Project Evaluator liaises with the panels and task forces at various stages (definition of instructional objectives, drawing up of syllabuses, production of curriculum materials) to ensure that various subject areas are in relation to each other and to the general objectives (File No. ME/78/13/12: July 1983).

In developing the various teaching and learning materials, much attention was paid to the principles of integration so that the subjects did not function at cross-purposes but developed in harmony, taking into account that they would all address themselves to the same child. The subject areas that would form the basis of this new curriculum were Languages, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Movement Education, and Creative Arts.

It was expected that the curriculum, while providing the child with the mechanisms of learning, would also provide for his mental, physical, psychological, social and aesthetic development and create in him an interest and a caring attitude for the environment.

According to the Project Document, the Project was planned in three stages as follows:

1. Standards I and II (the Infant Stage),
2. Standards III and IV, and
3. Standards V and VI.

Meanwhile in 1981, the MIE planned a timetable to cover the following:

1. planning of project and selection of pilot schools,
2. preparation of materials for Standard I,
3. training of pilot teachers for Standard I,
4. orientation programmes for inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers, and
5. some sensitisation of parents

It was also planned that, in the light of the feedback obtained from the pilot project, the new curriculum would become fully operational in all primary schools in Standard I as from 1983. The pilot schools, teachers and pupils would continue to participate in the pilot project in Standards II, III, IV, V, and VI in subsequent years.

The Project Document also mentioned the possible difficulties that might emerge in the process of development of the curriculum. In particular:

In view of the large number of teachers that will need to be retrained, it would not be possible to organise face to face in-service training for long periods of time, as the teachers will be needed in their classrooms. It is therefore envisaged that short frontal courses will be complemented by a multi-media approach, whereby correspondence courses, radio, television and regional seminars and tutorials will be fully utilised (File No. ME/ 78/13/12: July 1983).

The reorientation of the curriculum, particularly during the first two years, meant that traditional methods of teaching would give way to an activity-based, or child-centred approach. All teachers, including Oriental Language teachers, would be equipped to cope with the new system. This meant, for example, that heavy emphasis on reading and writing in several languages or learning to do sums right from the beginning might give way to the acquisition of more meaningful concepts and to preparing the child to become a better learner when he or she moved on to higher classes.

It was envisaged that in the early part of the teaching programme more attention would be given to oral skills. The teaching of other linguistic skills as well as mathematical and other basic concepts would be staggered in keeping with the child's development process (File No. ME/78/13/12: July 1983).

There were four major issues that had emerged since the reform began. They were the financial constraints, the concern for the CPE, the phasing of the Project and its dissemination.

The emphasis was put on the financial aspects of the Project which the Ministry would be asked to finance. It was unanimously agreed by the Steering Committee that:

there was a total lack of commitment on the part of the Ministry with respect to the funding; it was imperative that the MIE should press for a declaration of intent from the Ministry regarding Government policy for curriculum development at primary level (Letter from the MIE to the Minister: May 1982).

Soon after the elections (1983), the Steering Committee faded away. Instead it was left to the Minister (1983) to decide on the future of the Project. However the Progress Report discussed at the Planning and Coordinating Committee indicated to the Minister that the top priority was the financial support urgently required for the Project to proceed ahead. The role of the Ministry as a funding body in the development of this Project was crucial. Appropriate budgetary provisions were to be made for subsequent years. However, the Ministry was not in a position to commit itself to the funding of the Project right from the start. The UNDP as agreed by government before the signature of the Project Document had requested the appointment of a Director who could exercise substantial influence in higher level decision-making and collaborate with the MIE. Collaboration of this kind provided a noticeably appropriate framework for maintaining curriculum planning effectively and also for providing legitimisation of the Project. A reform movement which was regarded as legitimate because it was well protected by the Ministry, would have the force of law behind it, thereby ensuring its smooth and effective implementation in schools.

The appointment of such a Coordinator who was part of the ministerial machinery was believed at the MIE to be an appropriate tactic that could enhance decisions regarding such relevant matters as the CPE examinations, the phasing of the Project and financing.

## **Section 2: Analysis Of The Case study In Mauritius**

This section presents an analysis of the crucial events that transpired since June 1980 until the signing of the Project Document in October 1983 that confirmed the intention of the UNDP to support the reform.

This analysis is presented in accordance with the elements of the modified Hofferbert model, namely historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid and politically relevant incidents that influence the elite behaviour. This analysis is intended to serve two purposes. The first one is to see how far the elite behaviour was influenced by the pre-elite factors and the second was to single out all those elements that were most significant and to find out if there were other elements of significance that were missed out in the modified Hofferbert model. The events are now each in turn analysed in terms of the elements in the modified Hofferbert model.

### **Historic-Geographic Conditions**

It is asserted that the further development of the Primary Schooling Reform could not be understood if the history and the geography of the island were neglected. The signing of the Project Document between the government and UNDP was a historical event of significance to education. The Document also seems to suggest that the reform would take place without disturbing the existing governmental machinery that has persisted since the colonial days.

The Steering Committee and the Sub-committee had a theme: to improve the quality of primary education. This meant a recognition that the reform should be built from the existing system and hence the past would not be completely obliterated. The Steering Committee and the Sub-committee were to assume the responsibilities for framing policies, supervising and coordinating and were to develop the mechanisms of



learning that would provide for the aesthetic development and create an interest in and a caring attitude for the environment as illustrated in the UNDP Project Document. Such activities were conducted within the historical and geographical framework of the island. The actual situations prevailing in the schools were reviewed in terms of children and classroom, teachers and training, parents and their attitudes. These were facts of history that could not be discarded by these Committees. The decision taken was that the first pilot schools should reflect the Mauritius society by drawing in children from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The ancestral languages that were a part of the cultural heritage, were to be preserved and promoted in all the schools. Despite the fact that parents had still not made up their minds on "active teaching methods", the Committees had to build up from the existing situation prevailing in the schools. Even the members who formed part of the Committees were carefully scrutinised by the Minister to ensure their representativeness.

The general elections and the signing of the Project Document were all historical events. It is therefore apparent that there was a direct relationship between the historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition and governmental institutions and the decisions made at the time.

### **Socioeconomic Composition**

The Minister's decision to launch the Primary Schooling Reform was logical as he believed that the primary sector had not received attention and that the reform would positively benefit the population.

The strategies developed by the Steering Committee and the Sub-committee were in line with the socioeconomic structures of the island. For instance, the social and cultural factors had to be accommodated in the experimentation of the child-centred approach. The children and personnel were drawn from the different ethnic communities to reflect the plural aspect of the island. The ancestral languages were

also considered essential for the promotion and preservation of the cultural heritage. The Project Document demonstrated the wide participation of the people in general and particularly the programme that involved the sensitization of parents to the changes envisaged.

The economic situation seemed to be the background to the decision that the Committees were taking. The Minister (1983) was aware that the situation was economically stable especially in the context of a sympathetic UNDP, whereas after the June 1982 elections, the situation was not bright and this explains the non-commitment of the Minister (1982) to the reform and his ultimate resignation. The vested interests that were represented by a single group, namely the GTU which was a well-organised Union, illustrated the concern. However, at the interview it was asserted by the Minister (1983) that the voice of the public was heard individually and collectively in the country. The people's influences were always there. The Minister could not ignore them. This suggests that there was a constant pressure exerted upon the Minister.

Society and the economy were conditioned by the history and geography of the island. Socioeconomic composition, social development, mass political behaviour and politically relevant incidents influenced elite behaviour. The influences of the aid donors were, however, most profound.

### **Mass Political Behaviour**

The period under review was characterised by two general elections within a period of less than a year. There was a direct relationship between the historic conditions and the elections. That elections should be held in the country is a historical fact. The decision to hold elections is taken, historically speaking, by the Prime Minister and since a large number of parliamentarians resigned, he considered a fresh mandate essential for the country. In the first instance, the voters elected one

government in June 1982, and then ousted it since it did not respond to their needs. They elected another one in August 1983. Thus, the occurrence of elections was an event of great significance politically because it meant a change of government and that the masses had voted according to their preferences. New office-holders were ushered in with their own perceptions, attitudes and values which, in turn, influenced their behaviour.

It is also evident that a change in political regime provided an opportunity for a change of direction in policy. The Minister (1982) brought the reform initiatives almost to a halt whereas his successor pushed ahead with the reform with renewed vigour and showed a personal interest in the new programmes.

### **Governmental Institutions**

The decisions taken during this period were those of a single organisation, that being the Ministry with three Ministers in office at three different times. Such an organisation provided the framework within which the Minister (1983) was influenced by the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary who in turn received the directives from the Minister. But no Minister could act outside the limits set by the Constitution as specified in Section 1 of Chapter 5, just as a Director could not act outside the law specified by the MIE Act. The organisation had its own resources like the personnel but required sufficient reinforcement from overseas to fulfil the Minister's intentions. The Minister also adapted the reform initiatives within the existing governmental machinery.

The appointment of a Project Director of the Primary Schooling Reform was considered crucial by the UNDP since he would exercise a substantial influence in higher level decision-taking at the Ministry and specifically would exert a considerable influence on the Minister (1983) on all matters regarding the reform movement. The Working Paper presented by the Steering Committee indicated that such an

appointment would ensure coordination between the Ministry and the grassroots level and hence would help in the smooth running of the reform.

### **International Aid**

The UNDP perceived the role of the educational planner and the Project Director for the Primary Schooling Reform as one that would contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system. This idea was also perceived by the Minister (1983) as reasonable.

The Project Document signed by government and the UNDP took into consideration the recommendations made to the Minister (1979) by the UNDP in March 1980. The Document also justified the broad-based participation of a large number of people from different institutions, with different ethno-religious backgrounds. This meant a very heavy commitment on the part of the Minister (1979). The latter had to adapt to changing circumstances brought by politically relevant incidents like elections, to be rational and to adopt new directions. His views were reinforced by those of the UNDP. It is also apparent that political stability was a precondition to assistance from the international agencies. The recipient of aid had to show good intentions and be politically stable to qualify for aid. This explains the temporary freeze of UNDP's negotiations with the government just after the June 1982 elections, but which were renewed after the August 1983 elections.

### **Elite Behaviour**

Two major findings emerged from the review of the events in Section 1 of this chapter. The first was that it became clearer that the elite comprised a very small group: the Minister (1983), the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. The Minister was "the elite" but depended heavily on the resourcefulness of the Director and the Permanent Secretary who were his main source of advice, and who were

involved in decision-making on the review of the Primary Schooling Reform especially at the Curriculum Development Board (CDB), the charting of new directions and the search for assistance from UNDP. These decisions were taken in association with the Minister's announcement in 1979 and were considered necessary for the reform. The Director's advice, in particular, was considered valuable because he had followed the reform movement from its birth.

The review into the history of the reform initiatives brought out the need for strengthening the strategies geared towards the involvement of children and adults from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. There was recognition that the ancestral languages had to be preserved and promoted. Languages, ethnicity and religion served as a backdrop to the decisions taken by the Minister and the Director in setting up the strategies.

The elections were the two incidents that disturbed the environment and altered the perceptions and function of the elite. The ushering in of a new Minister in June 1982, revealed a pattern of behaviour different from his predecessor. The August 1983 elections brought a new Minister who responded to the masses' needs and aspirations. He declared his intentions, signed the Project Document with the UNDP and acquired assistance from the World Bank. He was convinced that the changes required in the primary sector were necessary and responding to the public demand. His decision to support the reform was also political and historical.

Faced with a range of environmental conditions, the Minister (1983) acted as a strategist to pursue his intention further. He recognised that the temporary freezing of the reform was a serious constraint. He allowed the Steering Committee to fade away and instead he took all the major decisions in association with the Director. His behaviour was perceived as a rational or "an understandable" response to the prevailing situation in the country. Such an undertaking implied responsibility, high commitments and risks that were necessary.

Elections were politically significant. The manner in which the population voted, ousting one candidate or party to bring in another candidate or party, was, of course, a highly significant influence on the behaviour of the elite.

### **Politically Relevant Incidents**

The general elections were politically relevant incidents. They were historical facts that occurred and should occur within a democratic setting. They were historically and politically most significant. It meant that the political regime changed twice with three different Ministers occupying the Education Portfolio at three different times. Each Minister had his own way of doing things according to his preferences, idiosyncracies, values and attitudes. It is asserted that these two events had an effect on the behaviour of the elite via mass political behaviour. These events also had long range effects on the policy-making elite who should respond to the needs and aspirations of the masses who voted for him. Mass political behaviour expressed in terms of voting at elections was a most important element that conditioned the behaviour of the Ministers (1982 and 1983).

The UNDP also responded to the changing political situations. The elections brought the activities of the UNDP virtually to a halt except after the establishment of a relatively stable government in August 1983. There is ample evidence to suggest that the elections had a significant influence on the Ministers.

### **Conclusion**

Figure 6.1 provides a summary of key influences on the elite during the period June 1980 and October 1983. The elections that were followed by the signing of the UNDP Project Document between government and UNDP were significant politically. The behaviour of the elite was characterised by rationality, risk-taking, commitment and adaptability to the evolving surrounding.

In this analysis, it was found useful to relate the criteria in the modified Hofferbert model to elite behaviour in two ways. First, the elite comprised three persons: the Minister, the Director and the Permanent Secretary. Second, it was apparent that the elite behaved in a rational way, that is, it responded to the changing contexts without drastically changing the existing governmental machinery. Mass political behaviour that brought changes in government also brought a change in the response of the elite to the environment. Third, the elite could not ignore the multi-cultural setting within which they were operating. Finally, political stability was a necessary precondition for receiving international aid.

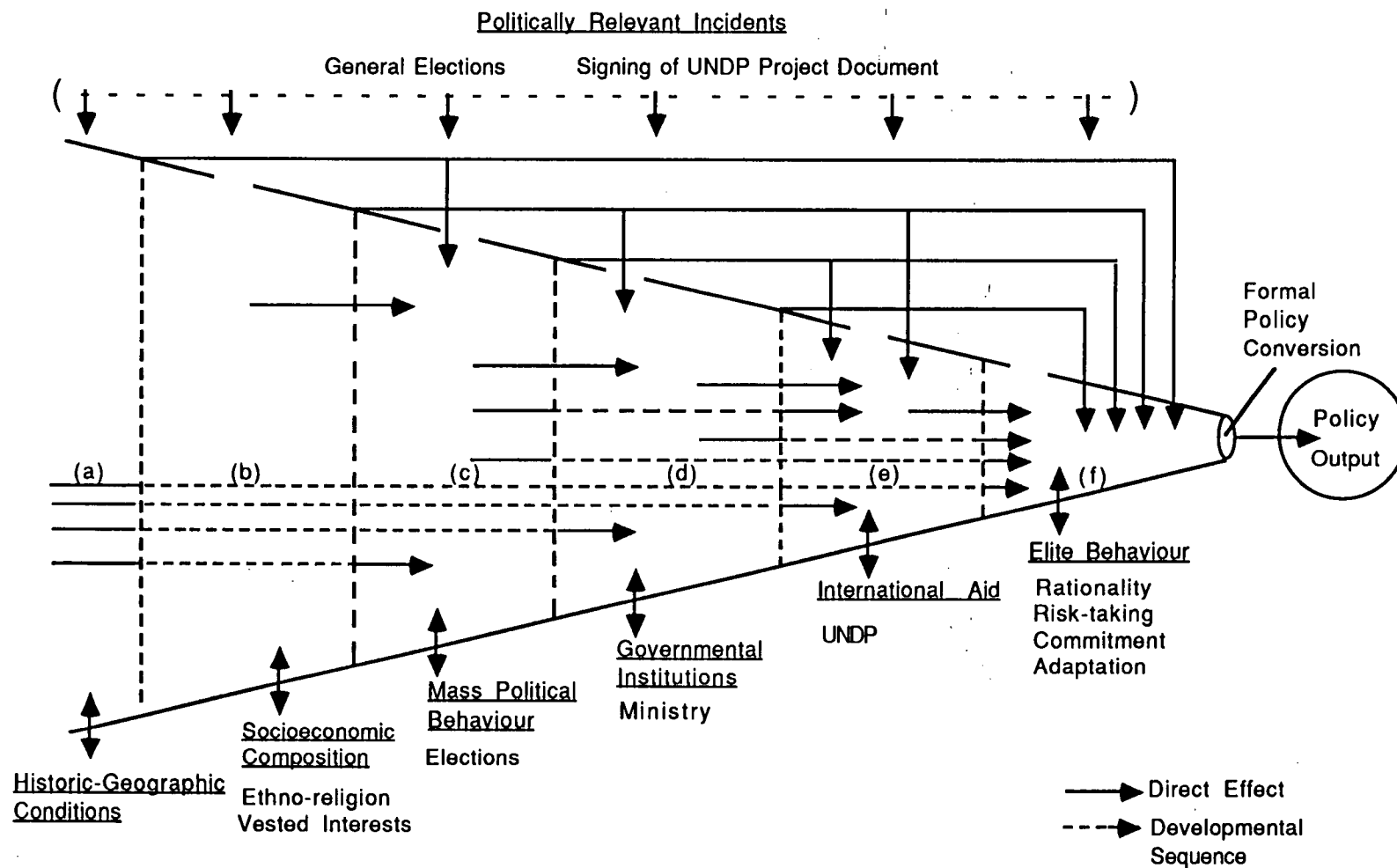


Figure 6.1 The Contexts of the Elite Behaviour in Mauritius (1980 - 1983)



## **Chapter 7**

# **The Minister's decisions to fine tune the primary schooling reform**

### **Section 1: Information on the Case Study in Mauritius**

This chapter presents the salient events that transpired after the October 1983 signing of the Project Document between government and the UNDP until the resignation of the Director of the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) in April 1986. These events were concerned with the setting up of the Planning and Coordinating Committee, the White Paper on Education, new studies and influences from the UNESCO consultants. These events were reconstructed, first, by identifying the central actors and second, by reviewing their actions. These events occurred as a result of decisions taken by the elite, namely the Minister, the Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) and the Permanent Secretary, in order to pursue further the reform initiatives in the primary sector. The purpose of this chapter is to reveal what those decisions were, who took them and what the influences were that shaped those decisions and how those influences could be understood. The period covered in this chapter was the concern of only one Minister (1983).

These decisions were viewed in close association with the environmental contexts within which they occurred. These were represented in the modified Hofferbert model as historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid, elite behaviour and politically relevant incidents. The research questions and the modified Hofferbert model provided a framework for the collection and analysis of information on the case study. The information was gathered from the Ministry's document and from interviews in Mauritius.

This chapter comprises two sections: Section 1 presents the events that occurred during the period specified in paragraph one, as follows:

- 1 the objectives of the Government,
2. the Planning and Coordinating Committee,
3. remedial education and dissemination,
4. the White Paper on Education,
5. new studies,
6. new directions,
7. consultancies,
8. new management structures,
9. cultural heritage, and
- 10 controversies.

Section 2 presents an analysis of the information in accordance with the modified Hofferbert model.

### **1. The Objectives of the Government**

After the June General Elections (1983) and the reinstatement of Hon. A. Jugnauth as Prime Minister and Hon. A. Parsooraman as the Minister of Education, and specifically with the signing of the Project Document between government and the UNDP in October 1983, the momentum of the activities of the reform movement increased. The development objectives of the government appeared for the first time in a comprehensive written form. They were concerned with:

1. improvement of the quality of primary education through a reorientation of the system in a manner that was compatible with the needs of the children and the country's socioeconomic needs;
2. the standardization of textbooks;
3. development of new teaching/learning materials for teachers and pupils;

4. training in-service teachers, headteachers, deputy headteachers and inspectors to improve the quality of primary education; and
5. devising new schemes of assessing pupil performance (File No. 78/13/12: October 1983)

## **2. The Planning and Coordinating Committee**

Another significant development during this period was the establishment of the Planning and Coordinating Committee in lieu of the Steering Committee, continuing with the same terms of reference with the exception that it was henceforth chaired by the Minister; the senior officials of the Ministry and the heads of all parastatal bodies were members. The chairmanship of this committee reflected the intrinsic value attached to the changes in the primary studies and also ensured that the wishes of the parents would be taken into consideration by the Minister.

The Planning and the Coordinating Committee kept a close watch on all the activities performed by the CDC. The thirteen curriculum teams, seven based at the CDC, continued their involvement in the development of curricula in English, French, Mathematics, Environmental Studies I (Social Studies), Environmental Studies II (Science), Creative Education and Movement Education. Six teams were working on the production of new curricula in Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi and Mandarin, with the aim of preserving the cultural heritage. These teams had a strong national orientation, consisting of practising teachers, inspectors, headmasters and deputy headmasters, and lecturers of the MIE and Mahatma Gandhi Institute. The institutional location of these teams had changed over time. These teams, with members seconded on a more permanent basis for the remaining life of the Project, were now permanently based at the CDC.

### **3. Remedial Education and Dissemination**

Two key issues related to the reform arose after June 1983 and attracted the attention of the Minister. They were remedial education and the programme of dissemination of the changes across the island. The Minister wanted these two areas to receive close attention, particularly in the rural areas where he felt children were lagging behind, with resulting dissatisfaction in the community.

Remedial education was considered to be directly related to the progressive implementation of the new curricula. It was consistent with the New Assessment Scheme in operation in a few trial schools. Remedial Education and the Continuous Assessment Scheme were both features of the overall strategies involved in implementing the reform. Efforts had been made to evolve screening tests at early childhood, pre-school and Standard I and II levels by the Ministry of Health but which the Minister thought was also his concern. He requested the MIE to monitor the progress in liaison with the health authorities. The MIE was working on a Continuous Assessment Scheme with a view to improving its usefulness, feasibility and practicability, making it fall in line with the objectives of the innovative materials. The existing schedule was found to be too cumbersome, something which necessitated a pruning down of several items to ensure appropriate handling in the classroom context. The tasks now facing the curriculum teams were the identification and enumeration of the different subjects' objectives in relation to pupils' materials on the basis of lessons or activities. The Director of the MIE planned the Continuous Assessment Scheme as follows:

It is the earnest hope of the Institute that the Continuous Assessment Scheme will be submitted to the Ministry of Education as a comprehensive package by the end of December 1983. It can undergo testing in some pilot schools throughout 1984 and could be improved in the light of evaluative feedback. Its implementation in all schools would be effective as from January 1985 (File No. 78/13/12: October, 1983).

The Minister and the Ministry agreed in principle that the reform should move ahead as fast as possible, according to the Project Document of UNDP. It should keep the public informed about the new ideas and the changes envisaged by the government. The Minister personally perceived that in-service training should be gradually decentralised with the creation of the Teachers Centres (now called Education Centres) as the pivot of almost all professional training, as the new studies spread further into all schools. It was also agreed by the Ministry that the "cascade" approach to training would be carried out by curriculum teams in the form of seminars and workshops by school inspectors who, in turn, would be responsible for training the headteachers and deputy headteachers at the Education Centres.

After much discussion at the Curriculum Development Board (CDB), the Minister approved the time scale as shown in Figure 7.1. Such a scheme allowed the Project to end two years earlier than expected.

This scheme suggested the entry of new materials into all schools simultaneously at Standard V level in 1986 and at Standard VI level in 1987.

This would ensure that Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) candidates would have at least a two-year familiarity with the new studies and would thus avoid the need for two types of examination papers at CPE level, except for the group of repeaters in 1987. It would enable the reform to be carried out within a shorter time-span, something which would almost coincide with the life span of the present government.

#### **4. The White Paper on Education**

While the Project was subjected to further fine-tuning, a most significant development in education occurred. It was the publication of the White Paper on

Stds	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
I	53	72	All			
II		53	72	All		
III			72	All		
IV				72	All	
V					All	
VI						All

Figure 7.1 Illustration of time scale on the Primary Schooling Reform

Source: Ministry of Education (1983)

(Stds represent Standards; figures indicate the number of schools; and All represents all the schools).

Education that was made public in June 1984. This event was followed by a public debate held at the Auditorium of the University of Mauritius on the 10 and 11 August 1984 and chaired by the Minister.

The White Paper looked at all sectors of education that were considered to require attention. It regarded the people of Mauritius as the main resource, expressed as follows:

It is in their abilities, attitudes and skills that the nation's future well-being must be based . . . The success or failure of our educational system will inevitably be judged by the degree to which it prepares people for productive employment . . . which will enable Mauritius to survive as a prosperous country . . . The child born today may be entering tertiary education shortly after year 2000 and could be at maximum productive capacity by 2025. We cannot foresee what changes in technology might occur over the next forty years. The micro-electronic revolution, the growth of biotechnology and increasing calls for the exploitation of marine resources are already bringing changes in the world of work; all these will have immediate and longer term repercussions on education (White Paper, 1984: 3).

The White Paper made a strong plea for an education that would provide comprehensive training to enable children to adapt themselves to a wide range of jobs. The acquisition of certificates, diplomas and degrees was insufficient for the average child to fit within the constantly changing Mauritius environment. Insofar as primary education was concerned, the policy objectives were that: "the educational system must be child-centred; it must be fair; it must be relevant; and it must be cost-effective" (White Paper, 1984: 9).

The White Paper (1984: 6) further identified the problems facing Mauritius education. These were the impact of the examination system on the majority of students, the poor quality of some schools, the low efficiency of the system due to drop-outs and repetition, and the lack of any clear relation between what goes on in the schools and the world of work.

Some of the corrective measures which it suggested should be pursued to bring education in line with modern trends and the needs of Mauritius were activity-based learning, equality of opportunity, relevance and cost-effectiveness approaches. These were further translated into specific programmes of action in a subsequent document entitled "A Plan for Education" that appeared in January 1986. This Plan was designed at the Ministry and took into consideration that Mauritius was:

Littered with the remains of old programmes which have never been implemented; of good intentions which have never been translated into practice. Any serious plan must be concerned with how it is to be carried out, and the machinery which will be needed to do so (White Paper, 1984: 28).

In order to make primary education "child-centred", "fair", "relevant" and "cost-effective", the Plan for Education (1986: 4) presented the objectives of Government policy as follows:

1. to provide equal opportunities to all pupils entering primary schools, something which could be brought about, not by lowering the standards of the best schools, but by improving the standards of the poorest schools;

2. to ensure that all children leaving primary schools should be at least literate, numerate, and able to express themselves clearly;
3. to revise the curriculum in the light of the changing needs of the country and the modern trends in education, specifying that further revision of the curriculum should only be undertaken in the light of experience in the schools; and
4. to provide educational materials to pupils at the lowest possible cost with pupils from the poorest families not being required to pay for the school books and in the longer run, there should be standard textbooks for all schools covering the whole syllabus.

The objectives of government were further translated into a plan of action composed of activities that would run for a period of three years. The activities were designed to achieve universal literacy and numeracy with the island-wide introduction of a scheme of continuous assessment up to standards I and II by 1985, up to Standards III and IV by 1987, and Standards V and VI by 1988. This meant that children with learning disabilities would be identified through the activities of the School Psychological Service. Such activities of the Service would include the preparation and use of standardized tests, research on under-achievement, counselling and remedial work within the cultural dimensions of Mauritius. This plan also proposed the setting up of a special study on the needs of children who leave primary schools without passing the CPE and without attaining minimum standards of literacy and numeracy. Finally, the Educational Centres that were in the process of being set up would be the focal points for teacher education and the identification of problems of schools.

The Minister was convinced that the White Paper was pointing to the right direction and he received feedback from his electorates that he was pursuing the right path. However, he perceived the need for ensuring the active collaboration of the



MIE, the Inspector and the schools. This collaborative style of curriculum development ensured, among other things, continuous contact with the realities in the schools and the optimum use of available resources in this sector. In this respect, the establishment of a CDC, as perceived by the Minister, was intended to improve further the efficiency of this model of curriculum planning and development.

By the time the White Paper became public, all children in Standard I were following the new syllabus, whereas only one group of seventy-two schools was following the Standard II syllabus, and another group of seventy-two schools was following the Standard III syllabus. This meant that the Project was gaining momentum, and further developments were envisaged. A letter, dated 28 June 1984, from the Director of the MIE to the Minister stated that:

The MIE is earnestly looking forward to a meeting with the Minister and Ministry officials concerning certain issues of the Primary Curriculum Development Project which need to be considered as urgently as is practicable so that the future direction of the Project can be charted.

These issues related to the phasing in of Geography, Arts, Crafts and Needlework, and Physical Education, the Government's input for the 1984/85 financial year, implications of the islandwide dissemination strategy of the Project and the Continuous Assessment Scheme and Remedial Education.

## **5. New Studies**

### **Environmental Studies**

The Environmental Studies programme had been used at lower primary levels i.e. Standards I, II, and III. The results of the experiment with this educational approach had proved its effectiveness, and indicated that the systematic and holistic learning afforded by this approach was also appropriate at upper Primary levels i.e. at Standards IV, V and VI. The application of this approach at Standards IV to VI levels had obviously to take into account the existence of Geography as a traditional subject

in the primary curriculum and also the need to accommodate elementary Science and History within this course at these levels (Information Paper: July 1984).

This meant that the Standard VI pupils would sit for the CPE examinations in 1987 and would have had two years familiarity with the new programme. It was understood that the text-book that would be designed for upper primary pupils would incorporate the combined Standards V and VI syllabuses, contents and learning activities.

The letter to the Minister also suggested that only one examination paper would be set in this curriculum area for 1987, except for the group of 1986 repeaters who could still sit for the traditional Geography paper.

### **Creative Education**

Another suggestion made by the MIE was that Arts and Craft, and Needlework that were considered separate subjects before the Project was initiated, should be brought under one subject called Creative Arts. The new curriculum, in operation since 1982, had integrated the contents of Arts, Crafts and Needlework under the title of Creative Arts which was restyled Creative Education when presented to the Council of Ministers on the 13 March 1985. Integration was considered necessary since these were practical subject areas which were "concerned with the emotional creative variety of materials and techniques and to the needs of both boys and girls" (Information Paper: July 1984).

This integrated approach has been proposed throughout the primary stage. It should be of interest to both boys and girls giving them the basic understanding of related vocabulary, the required manipulative skills and the development of creative thinking that would form a solid base for the advanced work in needlework at secondary level, and that would lead to socially productive work (File No. 78/13/12: July 1984).

The Minister went to Cabinet on 13 March 1985 to appraise his colleagues of developments in the framework of the on-going reform and they agreed to the changes in the primary curriculum as shown below.

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From traditional subjects	To new subjects
Geography	Environmental Studies (EVS)
Arts and Craft, Needlework, Handicraft	Creative Education
Physical Education (including Physical Education and Sports)	Movement Education

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The decision of the Government referring to the changes in the subjects was communicated in a letter of 29 April 1985 addressed to all the schools on the island. This change was considered a major breakthrough in the development of education aimed at improving the quality of education as desired by the general public.

Although the Project had gathered momentum, the Minister was not happy about the way things were happening. There was too much pressure exerted upon the Minister by his Party colleagues, unions and the parents in general. Now that so much in the way of human, material and financial resources had been devoted to the Project, it was decided by the Minister that the Project should definitely terminate at the end of 1987 when almost all children would sit for the CPE examinations based on the new curriculum. Changes that were envisaged by the Minister to enhance the effectiveness of the operation were related to the management structures and the role of the Project Coordinator.

## **6. New Directions**

A Working Paper on "The Philosophy of the CDC", drafted by the Permanent Secretary with the agreement of the Minister, was circulated on 26 September 1984 to the Directors of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Mahatma Gandhi (NGI), Mauritius College of the Air (MCA), Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) and the Private Secondary Schools' Authority (PSSA) with the request to examine the Paper and submit comments and suggestions.

The Working Paper made a strong case for the development of policies that would improve the "quality" of teaching and learning in schools that would lead to an improved quality of life, which was the major goal of government. The Working Paper looked at three aspects of development aimed at satisfying the goals of government:

1. curriculum development review,
2. the creation of a CDC, and
3. the development of high standards.

### **A Curriculum Development Review**

According to the Working Paper, teaching was viewed as "didactic, often permitting very little dialogue between teacher and the taught and there is an overreliance on textbooks" (Working Paper: September 1984). The review was conceived as follows:

1. to stress the purpose of the curriculum;
2. to stress the improvement of the skills and knowledge of the teachers;
3. to lay emphasis on the good quality of textbooks and other learning/instructional materials to stimulate reasoning, imagination and creativity over and above the imparting of skills, information and knowledge;

4. to diminish the emphasis on commercial textbooks on the open market which very often did not exploit visual aids; and
5. to integrate all available means of communication and the Ministry itself should take an active part.

### **The Need for a CDC**

The Working paper examined at length the existing management structures and proposed a CDC that should be the centre for innovation and improvement. It should be the "brain centre" or the "think tank" of the educational system with a store of professional expertise. Such a Centre should help to decentralise some of the activities performed at the Headquarters of the Ministry. It would have to look into the syllabus for every subject at all levels as well as a production of a range of curriculum instructional materials and aids. Further it should: "relate directly to the schools at the grassroots and be directly related to policy and decision-making and should have a high operational/implementation capacity" (Working Paper: September 1984).

The Working Paper further specified what should be the philosophy of such an institution in the Mauritius context:

The Centre will have greater "transparency" in its action through close liaison of the Ministry assuming the lead in collaboration with the relevant institutions. the responsibility of the Centre will go far beyond the mechanics of curriculum development as such . . . . It will have to inculcate in all officers a high sense of participation, a team work, commitment to creative aspects of development and willingness to take and assume responsibility (Working Paper, September 1984).

### **Development of High Standards**

To ensure a maintenance of high standards, the Working paper proposed that the CDC would have to be equipped with a library-cum-resource centre for high level textbooks and instructional materials. Further, it would have to link up with all the parastatal bodies to acquire their expertise and wisdom. The Centre would also be

geared to the production of outstanding materials. The teachers would play a direct role in the design and development of materials. It would also be the "privileged Centre for the on-the-job training of teachers in materials and curriculum development and implementation along with the inspectorate and other members of the education family" (Working Paper: September 1984).

### **Consultancies**

As the Project was progressing, the UNDP at the request of the Government of Mauritius, as agreed by the signature of the Project Document in October 1983, proposed the names together with the curriculum vitae of a dozen consultants out of which five were selected by Government but only three of them are considered of relevance to the study. They were:

1. Dr. J. Irvine (Australia) who examined Remedial Education in October 1984;
2. Dr. A.J. Young (United Kingdom) who examined Environmental Education in November 1984; and
3. Dr. J.W. Greig (Canada) who examined In-service Teacher Education in February 1986.

The terms of reference for Irvine were specified by UNESCO to be as follows:

- (a) assist local staff acquiring skills and ability in modern concepts and innovative approaches to remedial work at primary school level;
- (b) develop strategies with local specialists for innovation, experimentation and research in the field of Remedial Education;
- (c) conduct courses, seminars and workshops in the teaching of remedial education for both pre-service and in-service courses;
- (d) discharge any other functions which may be deemed necessary in the execution of the Remedial Education Project;
- (e) submit a typed draft report on his assignment to UNESCO headquarters.

The consultant's approach to remedial education was based on the reflection made in the White Paper (1984: 14 - 15):

As far as the individual child is concerned, ways are being devised for the regular assessment of literacy and numeracy throughout the child's school life. Such assessments are necessary if these children who fall behind are to receive remedial treatment in good time . . . Schools would be judged not only on their CPE results, but also on their success or failure in ensuring that all children who leave can read, write, express themselves clearly and carry out simple arithmetical operations.

The researcher's discussion with the consultant confirmed the view that schools that failed to achieve the minimal level of competency in reading, arithmetic and self-expression deserved attention although those schools whose problems were "not due to discernible disability requiring special educational provisions, must evolve a policy of remediation" (Irvine, 1984: 20).

Irvine considered that remedial education would be futile unless seen as part of:

a continuum of support stretching back to pre-natal, peri-natal and post-natal services, help in real terms to children and families suffering from malnutrition, poor sanitation and limited resource to provide infant and early childhood stimulation in all development areas (Irvine, 1984: 37-38).

This view was considered significant by the Minister for he perceived that remediation should be tied up with health of the child. In fact, the goals of Government were to improve the quality of life.

Young's consultancy, like that of Irvine, was within the framework of the UNDP assisted Primary Curriculum Development Project, with the following terms of reference:

- (a) to help improve the planning and development of curriculum materials for Environmental Studies in Primary Schools by guiding and assisting local curriculum developers in their work;

- (b) to help improve the organisation and conduct of in-service seminars, workshops and pre-service courses dealing with Environmental Studies teaching and evaluate their effectiveness;
- (c) to have an overview of the EVS syllabuses
  - (i) for Primary Schools, and
  - (ii) for the pre-service teacher training role of the Institute;
- (d) to assist local specialists in devising appropriate tests for assessing the performance of pupils in the field of both cognitive and affective domains;
- (e) to assist local specialists in the design of suitable measuring instruments to evaluate the curriculum materials in EVS produced at the Institute;
- (f) to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the on-going reforms in EVS and make necessary recommendations in this context;
- (g) to prepare a report to UNESCO at the end of the assignment.

The consultant recommended an effective dissemination of the new studies and suggested that the public should be made aware of the changes, a re-assignment of personnel across various institutions on a full-time basis, and that the Ministry should have to accelerate the decision-making process (Young, 1984: 23).

The consultant was, however, optimistic of the future, for much had been achieved. He perceived that:

The subject coordinators obviously want the project to succeed, the Director of the Project fully understands the aims and objectives of good practice and the Ministry recognises the magnitude of the undertaking (Young, 1984: 21).

The consultant recognised the highly centralised education system, with the decision-makers away from the grass-roots level.

The issue concerning in-service training was considered by the UNDP that delegated Greig (1986) to undertake a consultancy mission to Mauritius in February 1986. The terms of reference of the consultant were as provided by UNESCO to:

- (a) assist in consolidating the present effort in in-service training and strengthening the evolution of a coordinated island-wide programme of effective in-service education geared to the needs of the new curriculum and the requirements of the primary reform; and
- (b) assist in the further consideration of strategies that are needed to provide support for teachers (Greig, 1986: 1 -- 2).



The consultant perceived that, in spite of the prodigious efforts by the curriculum teams to mount a viable in-service training programme tailored to the needs of Mauritian teachers, many of the staff members felt that the in-service efforts had been only marginally productive (Greig, 1986: 13).

Further, he perceived that there "is the widespread belief that present efforts to meet demands of the primary reform through in-service education are unsatisfactory in both quantitative and qualitative terms" (Greig, 1986: 16). Among the major constraints on in-service training schemes identified were time limitations, shortage of school supplies, lack of teacher motivation, and logistical problems.

Based on the "lessons learned" Greig (1986: 16) recommended a wider participation of officials and non-officials in the reform. Further, he indicated that the in-service training programme must be regarded by all participants as having a "legitimate standing within the official, approved hierarchy with its direct endorsement and continuous, visible support" (Greig, 1986). Another recommendation was that teachers should be persuaded that the training activities were worthwhile and practicable, but that government should offer teachers some sort of motivation "to induce teachers to participate in the in-service programme with enthusiasm and commitment" (Greig, 1986: 17).

## **New Management Structures**

### **The Curriculum Development Centre**

The Minister drew the attention of the Director of the MIE and the senior officials of the Ministry to the fact that the reform movement would be a very challenging one in spite of being risky and all those concerned would have to operate within certain limits owing to the existing financial, economic and social constraints. He thought it was advisable and worthwhile to have the necessary consultations before

the setting up of the Curriculum Development Centre (Notes of Meeting: December 1984).

The Chief Education Officer responsible for the Primary Sector pointed out that: "It was now up to us to take the right decision in order not to dismantle what had been accomplished" (Notes of Meeting from the Minister's file: December 1984).

The Director of the MIE on the other hand stressed that there was an urgent need to rationalise the process and administration of curriculum development. He added that the main objectives of the CDC should be: "to ensure a coherent developmental curriculum in accordance with Government policy and . . . (a) maximum deployment of staff resources and facilities of the different bodies of the Ministry" (Notes of Meeting from the Minister's file: December 1984).

The Director of the PSSA was of the opinion that the past mistakes should be avoided: "One should learn from experience . . . there should not be excessive Mauritianization because Mauritius being a small country, would still need new ideas and contribution from outside" (Notes of Meeting from the Minister's file: December 1984).

The question of status of the CDC was raised by the Chief Education Officer in charge of Arts and Culture. He was of the view that the CDC should not be an independent body nor an extension of the MIE but as a "separate body and its staff would be recruited from the inspectorate of the Ministry, Schools, MIE and MGI . . . there was a need to have someone as Director for the Centre" (Notes of Meeting from the Minister's file: December 1984).

The Minister expressed his satisfaction at the suggestions regarding the CDC and "he was hoping that by January 1985, he would be in a position to bring the matter to the attention of Council of Ministers " (Notes of Meeting from the Minister's file: December 1984).

### **The Curriculum Development Board**

The creation of the Curriculum Development Board (CDB) in January 1985 replacing the Planning and Coordinating Committee, was a unique event in the Primary Schooling Reform. The CDB comprised the Minister as Chairman and the Permanent Secretary as Vice-chairman, with senior officials of the Ministry and all heads of the parastatal bodies as members. It was decided that the functions of the CDB would be:

1. to consider various projects proposed;
2. to advise the Minister on decisions to be taken in accordance with government policy;
3. to implement decisions approved by Government to initiate projects where necessary; and
4. to allocate resources.

It was also suggested that an Advisory Committee to the CDB would be set up. This Committee would include representatives of all Unions and PTA's concerned with education and their views would be brought to the attention of the CDB. But so far no such Committee has been set up.

The first meeting of the CDB was held on the 14 February 1985 under the chairmanship of the Minister. An important decision was announced by the Minister when he appointed the Deputy Director of the MIE as the Head and Director of the CDC which was to be created soon. He also added that the CDC would be accountable to the CDB and that all major decision-making would be taken by the CDB under a new management structure shown in Figure 7.2.

It was further agreed at the meeting that the status of the Director of the CDC would be reviewed at a later stage. The Director of the CDC was installed without any specific terms of reference but would liaise with different sections of the Ministry and,

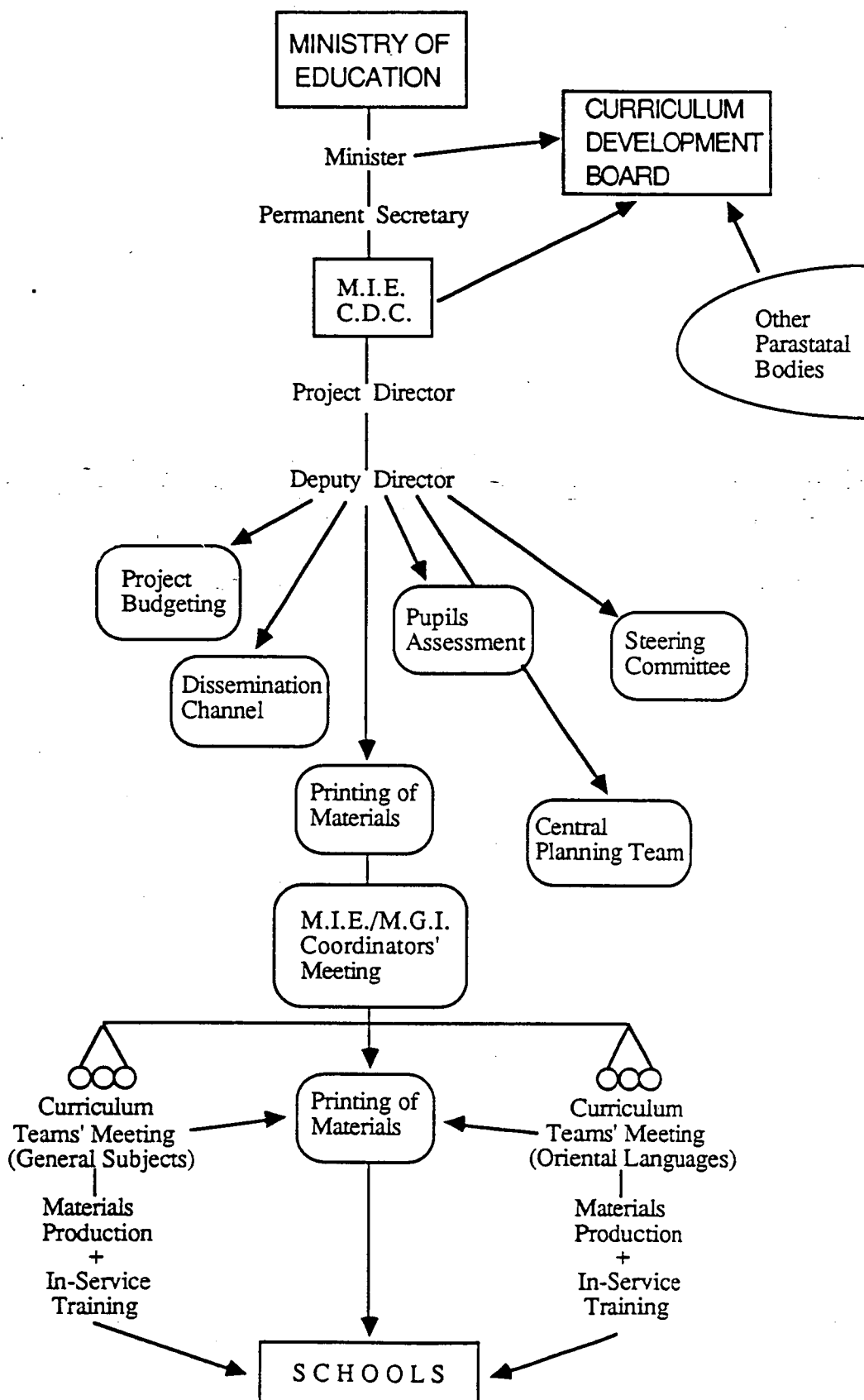


Figure 7.2 A New Mangement Structure for the Primary Schooling Reform  
Source: Ministry of Education, Mauritius (1985).

particularly, would forge links with the schools as shown in Figure 7.2. The Minister went to Cabinet twice; first to receive the approval for creating the CDC and, second, for publicising the decision of the Cabinet for the setting up of the CDC.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director would be entrusted with responsibility for the Centre until the organisation of the MIE was rationalised and streamlined so as to respond to the new developments. According to him, the MIE Council had already initiated action to review the organisation of the Institute and had referred the matter to a top-level Committee comprising the Minister, the Permanent Secretary, the Director of the MIE, the Chairman of MIE Academic Staff and Representatives of Academic Staff on Council.

With the approval of Minister at the CDB meeting on 23 April 1985, the Permanent Secretary wrote to the Director of the MIE, confirming that government had approved the establishment of a CDC which would be located on the former Mauritius College of Education (MCE) premises at Beau Bassin. The Centre would operate under the aegis of the MIE and would be accountable to the CDB chaired by the Minister. It would function within the national educational goals and work in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, the MGI, PSSA, MCA, MES and other relevant institutions.

It was also decided that the present Deputy Director of the MIE who was already the Director of the Project appointed by the Minister at the CDB Meeting on 14 February 1985, would be delegated the following responsibilities as Director of the Centre:

1. to advise the Board on curriculum development matters, on the requirements of the Centre and on the implementation of decisions relating to the running of the Centre;
2. to implement curriculum development activities and such other decisions taken by the Board;

3. to have control over the administration and management of the Centre, which included:
  - (a) control over the resources attached to the Centre;
  - (b) implementation of the allocation and use of funds as decided by the Board;
  - (c) control over the staff posted to the centre or attached to the centre for particular projects (posting and attachments would, however, be by mutual agreement between the head of the Centre and heads of institutions whose staff would be attached to the Centre); and
  - (d) liaison and consultation with the Permanent Secretary and Directors of all parastatal bodies concerning matters of common interest.

The Permanent Secretary said that, although the Centre would function within the general framework of the Mauritius Institute of Education, it would have a greater degree of "autonomy" than sections and departments of the MIE. The Director of the MIE would have an oversight of the Centre, but in practical terms he would delegate to the Director of the CDC the following responsibilities:

1. the Director of the CDC would devise a flexible "modus operandi" in collaboration with the Ministry, parastatal bodies and the University;
2. the staff employed at the CDC would be accountable through the Director of the CDC to their respective employers;
3. the CDC would have to evolve a system of public relations to enable it to consider genuine problems encountered;
4. all resources would be under the control of the CDB except those which would "be used exclusively for curriculum development activities . . . Planning, flexibility, coordination and consultation are important to ensure optimal use of resources"; and

- 5 dissemination and in-service courses would have to be planned and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry.

### **Personnel**

A problem related to personnel required for the smooth running of the reform was raised again and again by the CDC. In a letter of 30 November 1984, the Director of the CDC had already drawn to the attention of the Ministry that the reform movement was suffering from an acute shortage of staff, mostly because of the reluctance of the Ministry to release them. To obviate the difficulty of release, a list of inspectors, headteachers and deputy headteachers and teachers were "identified as potential members of various curriculum teams to be posted at the CDC on a full time basis" (Letter from the Director of the CDC to the Minister: November 1984).

Still another letter of 25 February 1985 from the CDC brought out the difficulties concerning the involvement of the Ministry's staff in the Project. Inspectors, headteachers, deputy headteachers and teachers had so far not moved permanently to the CDC because all of them already had "a full-time and demanding job to do" at school and such "duties should not be allowed to interfere with" the work at the CDC. Another difficulty concerning the reinforcement of the existing staff was that:

Pending Public Service Commission (PSC) clearance for full release, it would seem that the selected teachers are considering certain significant areas of incentive (e.g. status, salary benefits, job satisfaction) in deciding whether or not to commit themselves to the Project (Letter from the Director of the CDC to the Minister: February 1985).

Still another letter from the Director, dated the 26 March 1985, addressed to the Minister, made a very strong request to consider the urgent need for reinforcing the existing staff in each team.

Insofar as the Inspectors and Heads of schools are concerned, I (the Director) stated previously that these members with their administrative loads cannot be

said to be functioning effectively as curriculum developers during the two days that they are based at the MCE. The fact they are expected to apply their minds to two distinct jobs leads to a low degree of participant motivation.

Finally, the Director of the CDC requested the Ministry to look into the question of offering suitable incentives to all the staff working with the Project in an attempt to increase their degree of motivation.

In the face of opposition from curriculum teams at the CDC, the Ministry prepared a list of all participants at the CDC and submitted it to the Secretary of the PSC in May 1985, stating that all of them would be on secondment to the CDC and would simply assist the CDC to devise, produce and trial instructional materials.

### **Time-table**

Apart from the problem confronting the CDC in terms of personnel, the question of time-table became debatable. The school time-table had to be modified to accommodate new subject areas and to bring a certain equivalence in terms of contact hours among the main subject areas examinable at CPE level. The proposed time-table thus:

provides a balanced education for the primary child. It also provides for the readjustment of lessons at school level to facilitate the work of teachers and to take into account transport problems in specific localities (Letter from the Director of the CDC to the Minister: November 1985).

The new time-table was already in some schools, both urban and rural, and it appeared to work well and there were no fundamental differences in views about it between the Government and the Unions and parents. The basic guiding principles that were used in the framing of the time-table and which were acceptable to Ministry, Unions, headteachers, deputy headteachers, inspectors, teachers and parents were:

1. there was no increase in the school time-table as such, except in the lower standards, where the school ended ten to fifteen minutes later than previously.



2. English, French, and mathematics had the same time allocation on the proposed timetable.

The new proposal was justified on the following grounds:

1. it ensured that the Oriental Language lesson was not correlated with the Religious/Moral Education lesson;
2. it provided adequate time to the non-examinable subjects i.e. Creative Education and Movement Education in view of the stress laid on a balanced education for the primary child. The time allocation in these areas was almost negligible previously; and
3. it made provision for the insertion of new subjects on the curriculum in the near future e.g. Music, Moral Education, Culture and Civilisation of Mauritius (Letter from the Director of the CDC to the Minister: August 1985).

Another issue related to the time factor was the CPE examinations and the time schedule. The CPE was a major concern for parents and required a cautious approach on the part of Government. The time scale designed by the MIE in collaboration with the Ministry showed what could be the ideal situation as against the actual situation.

The main implications of the spread of the reform were cautiously analysed by the Ministry so that the new CPE examinations could be promoted in 1987 without endangering the existing stability. These included:

1. the timely delivery of materials in schools;
2. the accessibility of books to all teachers and pupils;
3. the reinforcement of advisory/professional services to schools; and
4. the steady funds to facilitate national spread of Project.

## **Cultural Heritage**

A Select Committee (1986) was set up by Parliament under the Chairmanship of the Minister to look into:

the performance of registered school candidates sitting for the CPE examinations in an Oriental Language from among Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Mandarin and Arabic can be considered for the award of the Certificate of CPE and for ranking purposes (Report of the Select Committee on the CPE, No. 7, 1986).

The Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the Minister and the views of the members sought. It was recommended that either Environmental Studies or an Oriental Language would be considered for ranking at CPE but only after 1993. This meant that the status quo had to be maintained (Report of the Select Committee on the CPE, No. 7, 1986).

## **Controversies**

The controversy continued to rage over the French programme with protest from religious organisations. The Mauritius daily newspaper, *L'Express*, which had one of the largest circulations, published on Tuesday 1 April 1986, an article entitled "Le manuel de francais de std V ne fait pas l'unanimité" (i.e. the French textbook of Standard V is not welcomed by all). The article presented the views of teachers' Unions and parents in general who expressed their dissatisfaction about the French textbook. They considered the French textbook too difficult for the children and also too difficult for the teachers to teach. It appeared that the Unions had explained the difficulties to the Director of the CDC who denied having had any discussion with any union. The Minister received many protests on the level of French at school, particularly from party members and the public in general and was very unhappy that the CDC was not handling the situation effectively.

Meanwhile, at the CDC, the situation had deteriorated by April 1986. The Director of the CDC could not, according to her letter of 8 April 1986, function if her

role continued to remain "ambiguous" and further she insisted: "unless there was a change in perceptions which would alter the existing assumptions about my roles as Director of the Project and Director of the CDC, I have no option but to ask to be reverted to my post of Deputy Director (at the MIE)".

The Director of the CDC was returned to her substantive post at the MIE and no Director of the CDC has been appointed since.

In spite of the constraints imposed by the changing environment, the Minister took a large number of crucial decisions that had far-reaching effects. He took the risks, adapted himself to different situations and was generally regarded to have acquired a large measure of success. The Report of the Study Panel on Tertiary Education (1985: 10) supported the Minister's actions as follows:

We understand the rationale behind the view that the Government should be directly concerned with formulating policy for curriculum planning and development, and with providing and/or monitoring the supply of funds.

Those decisions taken by the Minister are revealed in this section and it is apparent that they were made in response to the society in which he was living. An analysis of the environmental factors as they influenced the Minister's decisions appears in the next section.

## **Section 2: An Analysis of Information on the Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius**

Section 1 of this chapter presented the significant events that occurred in the Primary Schooling Reform between the signing of the UNDP Project Document in October 1983 until the resignation of the Director of the CDC in April 1986. This period was characterised by the establishment of the objectives of the Government, the setting up of the Planning and Coordinating Committee chaired by the Minister, the concern about remediation and dissemination, the publication of the White Paper on

Education, the introduction of new studies, the charting of new directions, the influences of the UNESCO consultants, the creation of management structures and the preservation of the cultural heritage and controversies. All these events were a result of the decisions that were taken generally by the Minister, occasionally in association with the professionals like the Director of the MIE, the Permanent Secretary or with members of the CDB. Equally important to the understanding of elite behaviour is to reveal what happened behind those decisions. The events are now analysed in accordance with the modified Hofferbert model, the elements of which are historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid, elite behaviour and politically relevant incidents.

### **Historic-Geographic Conditions**

The decisions taken by the Minister that heralded the creation of the Planning and Coordinating Committee, the White Paper on Education, new studies and UNESCO consultancies, should be viewed in the light of past events. There was a theme: the intention of the Minister was to improve primary education and, in so doing, to improve the well-being of society. This is a historical fact that was illustrated in "The Future in our Hands" and "Laying the Foundations". Similarly, the improvement of primary education, according to the Plans, should be compatible with the socioeconomic needs. The Plan of Action, as stated in it, made provision for the supply of materials free of charge to needy and poor children. Thus the theme of well-being of society, which is a historical fact, recurs quite often during this period.

Because past management structures did not work, new ones had to be created so as to respond to the changing situations. The White Paper, for instance, presented the ineffectiveness of a large number of programmes initiated by the government but which were never completed. This was a historical fact that served as a basis for the

Minister's thinking and which subsequently led to the translation of the recommendations of the White Paper into a Plan of action. The Select Committee also signified a historical fact, that being the preservation of the cultural heritage.

### **Socioeconomic composition**

Socioeconomic composition is mutually dependent on the historical facts. History and geography continue to condition the social and economic structures, and the relationship of the island to international agencies.

It is asserted that, with time, the perception of the Minister changed insofar as the Primary Schooling Reform was concerned. His perception was that the MIE was working too much in isolation and hence did not keep in contact with the realities of the school. It was thought necessary for new structures to be set up and to reassign the personnel across the different parts of the reform initiatives. Thirteen teams drawn from different ethnic groups were working at the CDC which was also involved in pooling resources and optimising manpower resources from the whole educational environment, taking the socioeconomic, and ethno-religious composition into consideration. The Minister possessed the authority and power which he used to achieve his goals. Such behaviour was normal and appeared to respond rationally to the society around which he lived at that particular time.

### **Mass Political Behaviour**

There is no evidence of any major event that could be characterised as politically significant but the effects of the behaviour of the masses at the last elections loomed heavy in the environment. Such influences should not be discarded outright for, although everything became normal after the elections, an understanding of the elite should be looked at in terms of the conditioning effects of the elections. It is reasonable to say that the Minister was influenced by his Party and the electorates who

brought him to office. The effects of the mass political behaviour would last for a long period. It is also asserted that lobbyists directed all their efforts not to a multiplicity of points but direct to the Minister. Elections were marking points but democratic governments were still monitoring the electorates between elections.

### **Governmental Institutions**

Governmental institutions were similar to those of Britain and were a fact of history. There was a linkage between history and the governmental institutions. These institutions became relevant to the Minister on a temporary basis, i.e. as long as he was in office. The senior officials who served him were on a permanent basis and were the most important source of professional advice, although the final decision rested with the Minister. But the Minister was sensitive to the needs of the pluralist society. In order to serve better, he strengthened his authority and power over the reform by centralising the power in the CDB. On the other hand, the CDC and the MIE were keen to keep their own territorial integrity and self-interest. But all the powers of the institutions were in the hands of the Minister and it was left to him to decide how much power could be devolved and shared with others.

It is the responsibility of the Minister to resolve conflicts that are of public consequence. It is also argued here that the contributions of the governmental institutions within which the decisions were taken were not measurable.

The power structure of the institutions had an influence over most matters related to the reform that had a national consequence. The Minister controlled all the resources: human, financial and physical. Below the Minister was the Director of the MIE who was a key leader providing advice and carrying out the wishes of the Minister. Below the Director was a set of senior officials of the Ministry under whom the teachers, deputy headteachers, headteachers and inspectors functioned, but whose power vis-a-vis the reform was not defined. Below the public officers were the

teachers' unions and the parents, and the schools, and these were perceived to have no defined power. The powers that the common people had were those that were derived from the Constitution and the cultural structure of the society. These also revealed the conflicts that arose at the CDC when it was not possible to weld all the participants under one philosophy. Such conflicts could be resolved only by the elected office-holder like the Minister. He was sensitive to the balance of interests among the different ethno-religious groups working under the same roof. It was in his interest to resolve the conflicts for, should the dissatisfaction persist, it could be reflected in subsequent mass political behaviour on election day which could be disastrous for the Minister. The interview with the Minister revealed that the French issue was handled in a manner to give satisfaction to the religious bodies, teachers Unions and the parents in general.

### **International Aid**

The argument seems to be that the influence of the UNDP was most significant on the Minister, particularly before the signing of the Project Document. With the passage of time, he was faced with a set of obstacles and had to adjust the courses of action according to the changing circumstances. The adaptation of the Minister within a changing context could not be measured but could be observed through his actions, namely, the creation of the CDB and the CDC by Cabinet decisions. These management structures were not envisaged in the Project Document. It also implies that the Minister had his own way of doing things. The three consultancies, as illustrated in Section 1 of this chapter, made significant recommendations, namely, the need to ensure that children leaving school should be able to read, write and carry out simple arithmetical operations; they also proposed corrective measures and a continuous support for the malnourished and the poor. Two important

recommendations of Young (1984) were to reassign the personnel on a permanent basis and to accelerate decision-making at the Ministry.

### **Elite Behaviour**

In this analysis, it emerges that the elite comprised a very small group of people, namely the Minister, the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. It is first asserted that the Minister was sensitive to the whole range of environmental influences so that any attempt to disregard the context would be non-rational. He was very much aware of the wishes of the parents and the need to preserve the cultural heritage by promoting the Oriental Languages; he recognised the significance of the White Paper and the Plan of Action, and the magnitude of the undertaking (Young, 1984). Second, the idea to create the CDC was considered by the Minister as most crucial to the success of the Primary Schooling Reform and the moment, according to him, was ripe for action as it responded well to the needs of the society around him.

It is further argued that, as in the modified Hofferbert model, the governmental structure was a creator of significant institutional constraints. For instance, the way the Minister was served by the CDB in matters concerning the interest of the personnel working at the CDC, could be a major constraint. This leads us to assert that changes in the constraints in the elite behaviour necessitated changes in the behaviours themselves. This was illustrated by the setting up of the Planning and Coordinating Committee that gave way to the CDB and the CDC, and the appointment of a Director without authority. Changes in the momentum of the reform altered the context in which the Minister and his advisers operated and necessitated new behavioural and organisational responses like the creation of the CDC.

The history of the changing constraints like those brought by the elections and their adaptations to them, is of significance not only to the understanding of elite behaviour but also to the analysis of this behaviour. Thus the historical aspects might



show the extent of the elite adaptability and the range of influences he tolerated or rejected under different circumstances.

The measurement of elite behaviour, particularly that of the Minister who was the key actor, becomes more complex and most difficult to measure. What was the extent of influence by the Director of the CDC? There is no way to unmask the dimension of this influence. There were patterns of interaction between the elite and the Cabinet for example. Both of them initiated things to meet their goals, lived with some knowledge of the past and had to live like all human beings through time and their environmental contexts.

### **Politically Relevant Incidents**

The incidents that were politically significant were the publication of the White Paper, the Report of the Select Committee and the establishment of the CDB chaired by the Minister. The most significant events of political relevance were the two elections (August 1982 and June 1983). The White Paper tabled in Parliament was considered a blueprint for action and subsequently led to the publication of the Plan of Action. The White Paper also encouraged the Minister (1983) to pursue his action in the Primary Schooling Reform. Thus he created the CDB, CDC and introduced new studies that were landmarks in the history of education in Mauritius. The mass political behaviour as expressed at the polls had a long term effect on the behaviour of the elite, in this instance on that of the Minister (1983) who had to respond to the electorates who elected him to office.

### **Conclusion**

Figure 7.3 illustrates the elite-environment relationship. It is argued that the modified Hofferbert model is consistent with the notion that the historic-sociopolitical-mass-governmental-aid-politically relevant incidents influence the action of the elite

who were living in an environment of change and adapting to a variety of different circumstances. Changes in the Primary Schooling Reform, for instance, altered the context in which the elite operated and necessitated new behavioural and organisational responses.

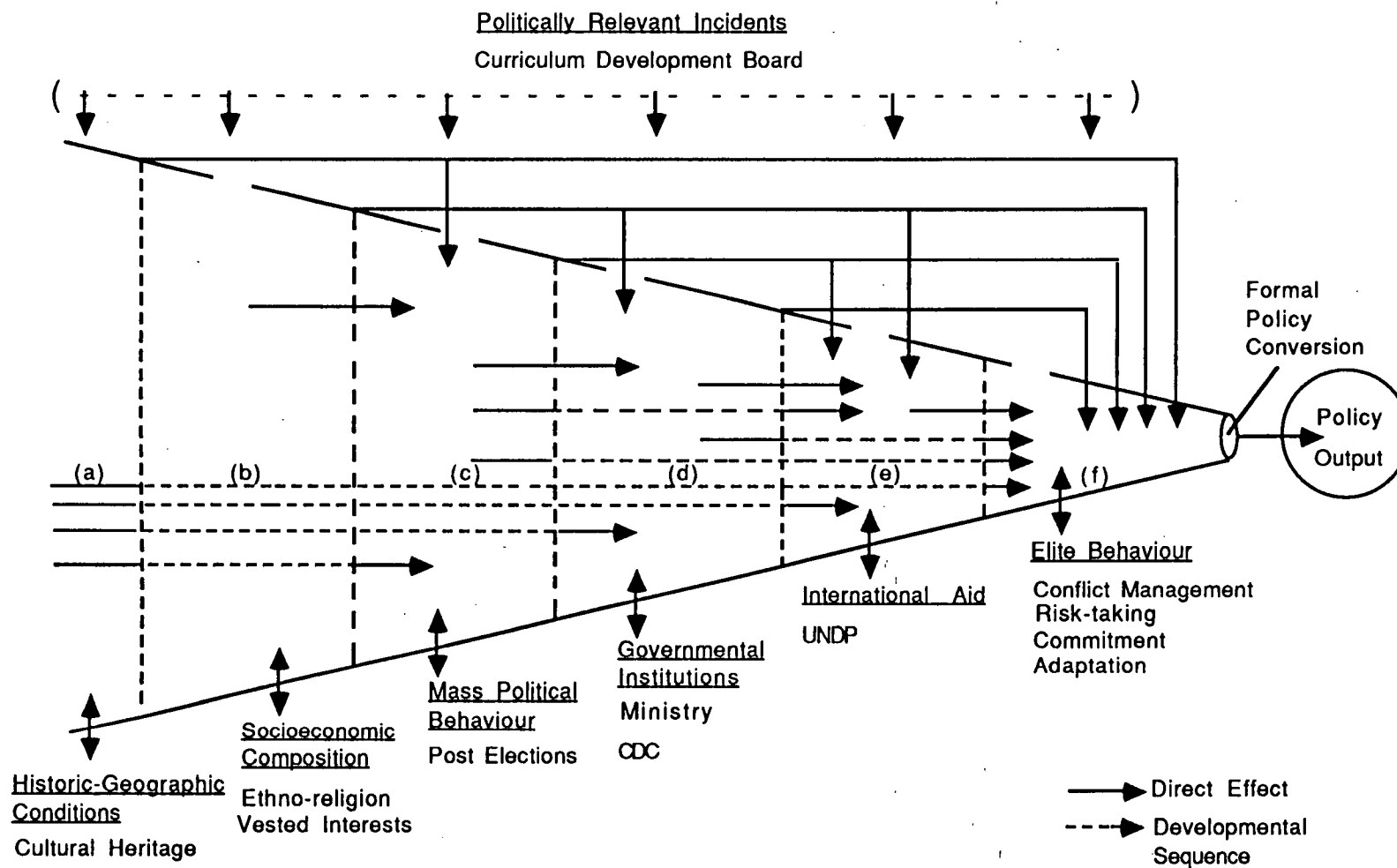


Figure 7.3 The Contexts of the Elite Behaviour in Mauritius (1983 - 1986)

## **Chapter 8**

## **Summary, findings and recommendations**

This chapter contains a summary of the study as reported in the preceding chapters. This chapter includes eight sections as follows:

1. the purpose,
2. questions for research,
3. the design of the conceptual framework and the research methodology,
4. findings,
5. a synthesis of elite behaviour in education policy in Mauritius,
6. implications for theory development,
7. implications for research in future,
8. implications for Mauritius and developing countries.

### **The Purpose**

The purpose of the research was to understand how policy was made and implemented in Mauritius. This was accomplished through an exploration of the events that occurred around a single issue, that being the Minister's announcement in September 1979 concerning his intention to go ahead with a Primary Schooling Reform in Mauritius. This exploration had two intentions. The first was to reveal why this decision was taken by the Minister and the manner in which it heralded a series of events. The second was to identify what the influences on the behaviour of the decision-makers were and how those influences could be understood.

The results of the research were intended to be useful in two distinct ways. One was that such a study would provide a specification of a framework for understanding policy and policy related activities in Mauritius. The other was that such a framework would have value in understanding similar processes in other island nations among developing countries.

In September 1979, the Minister made a declaration of intent to bring about a reform of the primary sector. This was meant to improve the quality of primary education that he perceived would consequently improve the quality of life in the island. All the events that transpired between January 1979 and April 1986 and which were relevant to the study were explored.

## **Questions for Research**

There were four key questions and fourteen sub-questions as follows. The key questions are mentioned below, whereas the sub-questions, including the key ones, will be mentioned in turn, in the section of this chapter which summarises the findings.

### **Key Questions**

1. What were the factors that directly or indirectly conditioned the Minister's (1979) announcement to proceed with the Primary Schooling Reform in September 1979?
2. What were the strategies established by the Minister (1979) to further shape the announcement?
3. To what extent were the Minister's (1983) decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform influenced by the environmental conditions?
4. To what extent did the environmental conditions influence the Minister's (1983) decisions?

## **The Design of the Conceptual Framework and the Research Methodology**

### **The Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 4, was designed after a review of relevant literature on the policy domain, largely derived from the developed countries (Chapter 2), and from factors influencing policy activities in three regional

clusters of island nations among developing countries (Chapter 3). It was essentially based on Hofferbert's (1974) model for comparative study of policy formation modified by the international aid factor which was a major element in educational development in developing countries in general and particularly in Mauritius.

The conceptual framework served two purposes. First, it was used as an instrument to shape methodology and, second, it provided a framework for analysis of information gathered in Mauritius. It was intended that the conceptual framework would ultimately be evaluated and refined in the light of a synthesis of findings.

### **Research Methodology: The Case Study Method**

The case study was concerned with the decision of the Minister (1979) to launch a Primary Schooling Reform. This instance encapsulated all those significant events that led to the announcement and the major events that followed as a result. The selection of events was guided by research questions and the elements of the conceptual framework. Information was organised and analysed with the aid of the conceptual framework. The key actors were identified and their actions reconstituted so as to understand the influences that shaped their ideas and actions.

For the sake of convenience the events were presented in three parts as follows:

1. The Minister's (1979) statement of intention that covered the period January 1979 to June 1980;
2. The Ministers' (1979, 1982 and 1983) strategies in the Primary Schooling Reform that covered the period June 1980 to October 1983; and
3. The Minister's (1983) decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform that covered the period November 1983 to April 1986.

The review was based on the study of documentary materials such as files, internal memoranda, official reports, letters of the Ministry, and from interviews carried out with a wide cross-section of the population of the island.

The accuracy of factual information was confirmed by a panel comprising the Permanent Secretary, the Director of the MIE and Mr. Percy Selwyn, Adviser to the Minister. This validation cross-checked the information gathered from the documents of the Ministry and at the same time enhanced the understanding of the environment of action and the identification of relevant information in a systematic way.

The validated information was further analysed in Sections 2 in each of Chapters 5, 6 and 7 according to the conceptual framework as presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 8 provides a summary, findings and recommendations.

## **Findings**

The findings are organised according to the research questions. There were four key questions and fourteen sub-questions and each in turn will now be answered.

### **Key Question**

#### **1. What were the factors that directly or indirectly conditioned the Minister's announcement to proceed with the Primary Schooling Reform in September 1979?**

There is evidence to suggest that there were significant factors that directly and indirectly conditioned the announcement of the Minister in September to launch the Primary Schooling Reform. "The Future in our Hands" demonstrated the thinking of the Minister insofar as it was his duty to respond to the needs and aspirations of the society in which he lived and knew well. In the same book, he mentioned that the love and care that parents showed to their children, in their respective ethno-religious groups, should be reflected in the schools. This served as the basis of thinking of the Minister.

"Laying the Foundations" and the UNESCO missions that made a large number of far-reaching recommendations and which became a "seminal source" (Greig, 1986: 4) for Primary Schooling Reform, directly influenced the Minister. Their identification of the fundamental problems of education helped to reinforce his views. The Minister's announcement was a political decision made at a public function

and it had also a political history. Such a decision was not made in a vacuum but in association with the changing societal needs. "The Future in our Hands" demonstrated that the colonial system of education was not in conformity with the changing needs of the evolving society. Parents had already expressed their concern about the CPE examinations. The Minister was aware of the needs of the society at large and he knew the history of the country. It is asserted that historical factors had a direct influence upon him. He took a risk but he was convinced that what he was doing was what the society was looking for. He had to adapt himself to the changing circumstances. He was thus rational in his thinking.

### **Sub-questions**

#### **1.1 How easily manageable was this announcement in the environmental context within which it was made?**

Three significant factors were identified as constraints. The first was that it was made at a time of financial austerity and a demand from the public for more cost-effective use of the public funds. Economically it might not have been feasible to bring about far-reaching changes in primary schooling but socially it was desirable. Parents had vociferously condemned the CPE examinations and the government's inability to redress the situation.

The second constraint was that the Minister's announcement did not include the financial commitments. Could there have been intentions without financial commitments? It is apparent that the Minister was certain to receive the assistance of the UNDP which had already demonstrated its participation in the strengthening of the pre-primary sector and the lower secondary schools.

The third constraint was that the Minister provided no guidelines as to how his intentions were to be translated into strategies, targets and ultimately the goals of improving the quality of life. The non-provision of guidelines was a deliberate attempt to give the Director of the MIE a free hand to capture and translate the intention of the



Minister. It also reflected the high regard and confidence he had in the Director and was convinced that he was the right man for this job.

It is asserted that the politically stable environment at that particular time was conducive for the announcement. The socioeconomic, political and external resource factors were all favourable to his intention but he worked under transient conditions because of the perpetual changes in the context. It is argued here that another Minister with a similar ideology and vision, functioning under similar conditions, would have responded in the same way. Conversely, unfavourable socioeconomic, political conditions and shortage of resources would have acted as serious constraints and discouraged all innovative activities in the primary sector.

### **-1.2 What were the specific issues this announcement was addressing at that time?**

There were two specific but related issues which the Minister's announcement was addressing at that time. They were the poor quality of primary education and the wastage of resources. The core issue was the poor quality of primary education. Children leaving primary schools were largely illiterate, i.e. they never achieved a minimum level of reading, writing and numeracy competency. Different learning approaches that could improve the quality of education, adopted elsewhere, were not introduced in the primary schools. The teachers were untrained, had a low status and carried out "ritualistic" teaching, unfit for the age and ability of the child, and inappropriate in the transient socioeconomic environment.

The primary sector also suffered from the wastage of resources. These were essentially the children who dropped out of the system in large numbers. The system was examination-oriented and the children's performance at the CPE decided their future life options. Financial and physical resources that were rare were perceived by the Minister to have been utilised in an ineffective way.

The Minister perceived as a cause for grave concern the factor that children leaving primary schools were unable to adapt themselves to the environment in which

they had to live for the rest of their lives. His expectations were that a Primary Schooling Reform would enhance the child's adaptability to his environment and would contribute to a better life.

Schools according to the Minister should reflect the love and affection that were shown to children by their parents and the community at large. They should provide children with a keener insight into the natural environment of the island and develop an aesthetic sense in them so that they could appreciate their rich cultural heritage.

That schools should be child-centred, fair, relevant and cost-effective, were recognised as a major plank in the mind of the Minister. Such expectations were perceived by the Minister to make a better society.

### **1.3 How did key actors like the Director of the MIE and the vested interests respond to this announcement?**

There is evidence to suggest that the key actors, particularly the Director of the MIE and the senior officials of the Ministry, responded favourably to this announcement. First, it meant that the Director had to capture what the intentions of the Minister were. Second, it meant the intentions were to be translated into a programme of action. In the absence of any guideline and any financial commitment, the Director had to accommodate the intentions of the Minister as perceived by him into a plan of action. The Director of the MIE was under the direct control of the Minister and had to implement his decision. However, it is reasonable to say that the Minister was confident of the expertise of the MIE and the Director was also confident of the outcomes. It was the duty of the Director to devise the appropriate strategies for the reform. There is evidence to suggest that the Director had certain working arrangements with the Minister, for he informally discussed the strategies and the courses of action and received the authority to pursue further action. It is argued here that the Director directly influenced the Minister in his decisions and they were both aware of the intentions and the difficulties for translating the intentions.

There is no evidence to suggest the influence of the vested interests. But it is asserted that the actions of the parents, though not always visible, were always there and the Minister was very sensitive to them.

**1.4 What were the factors that were perceived to have a greater influence on the Minister's (1979) thinking at one particular time than at another?**

The socioeconomic and political elements were perceived to have a strong conditioning influence on the Minister's behaviour at the time of the announcement. These elements were already identified by the Minister in "The Future in our Hands" and appeared to be always influencing the announcement and the subsequent decisions emerging from it. The welfare of the society could not be divorced from the improvement of the quality of education.

"Laying the Foundations" defined some of the ideas of the Minister as presented in "The Future in our Hands". It is apparent that the former helped to clarify the thinking of the Minister by providing him with more information. The UNDP proposals served to reinforce his ideas.

The vested interests of bodies like the PTAs appear to have had a minimum effect on the Minister. However, it is argued that the vast majority of parents, who made no formal representation to the Minister, were desirable of change in the primary schools. The Minister was aware of their feelings and knew that he had to respond to them.

## **Conclusion**

The Minister's announcement had a political history and is unintelligible outside the environmental contexts at that time. Socioeconomic and political conditions influenced him in his decisions to bring about the Primary Schooling Reform that would, in turn, improve the quality of life of the society around him. Such influences were the key to the understanding of his behaviour.

For the successful implementation of his intentions, he conceived the MIE, with its vast experience, to be ideally suited. The Director of the MIE was the key actor that translated the Minister's intention and influenced the Minister in his decisions.

There were no constraints envisaged although the Minister was conscious of the drawbacks imposed by the shortages of resources. He was confident that the UNDP would assist and that the locally available resources had to be utilised meanwhile.

### **Key Question**

#### **2. What were the strategies established by the Minister (1979) to further shape the announcement?**

The MIE was entrusted to launch the Primary Schooling Reform in collaboration with the Ministry and other parastatal bodies. The main strategies were those initially designed by the Director of the MIE and agreed to by the Minister. They had to do with the setting up of the Steering Committee and the Subject Panels and the Task Forces. The Steering Committee was responsible for the identification of problems, the definition of broad objectives and the indication of appropriate lines of action. This exercise was reinforced by the administration of a questionnaire that indicated the needs of the people.

The responses to the questionnaire and the deliberations of the Steering Committee indicated that the reform should not start at the primary level but rather at the pre-primary level. This choice was advantageous in two ways. First, the UNDP was already assisting the strengthening of the pre-primary sector and the MIE could draw from this experience. Second, it ensured that the reform was based on a continuum, starting from the pre-primary, through primary into the lower secondary where the reform was already assisted by the UNDP.

The signing of the Project Document was considered a great success by the Minister. The appointment of a Director of the Curriculum Development Centre

(CDC), the creation of the Curriculum Development Board and the CDC, and the introduction of new studies were all significant strategies geared towards improving the quality of education.

The CDB chaired by the Minister was responsible for all major decisions. The CDC had no power of its own. All decisions regarding crucial matters like finance and personnel were to be dealt with by the Minister. This relationship created constraints in the functioning of the CDC.

### **Sub-questions**

#### **2.1 How far were those strategies a response to the environmental contexts?**

The personnel on the Steering Committee and at the CDC were drawn from different institutions across the island and from different ethnic groups. The UNDP responded favourably specifically as it realised the importance the Minister attached to this reform. The Minister perceived the UNDP assistance to be vital to the success of the reform and that the UNDP was conscious of that.

The strategies were subjected to change through time. This was necessary because of the dynamic nature of the environment. Two politically relevant incidents, the June 1982 and August 1983 elections, demonstrated the mass political behaviour that ushered in two different Ministers (1982 and 1983) with different attitudes.

The creation of the CDC and the CDB in lieu of the Planning and Coordinating Committee, by Cabinet decisions, reflected the importance that the Minister (1983) attached to the reform. Such management structures were assumed to respond favourably to the reform initiatives. The Minister perceived that the primary sector was too important a sector to be left in the hands of others. This explains his decision to set up the CDB chaired by him and which became the central decision-making body.

## **2.2 How were those strategies perceived by the key actors like the Director of the MIE and the senior officials of the Ministry?**

The strategies were assumed to be most appropriate for tackling the various issues that emerged through time. The Director of the MIE, who was the key adviser to the Minister, concurred with the Minister's decisions.

Neither the Director of the MIE nor the senior officials of the Ministry could perceive that the CDC was not responding effectively to the changes that were required. The personnel that belonged to different racio-religious groups, drawn from a wide range of institutions, did not weld together with a single purpose in mind because of their dual role, as a teacher on the one hand, and a curriculum developer on the other.

The strategies concerning the remediation and the dissemination programmes, including the sensitization of the parents, were perceived not to have functioned properly. The UNESCO consultants drew to the attention of the Ministry, responsible for all decisions, the need for setting up other strategies.

## **2.3 How far were the Minister's (1983) decisions compatible with the emerging issues at different times?**

The issues facing the Primary Schooling Reform changed through time. For instance, the problem concerning the personnel was not significant soon after the Minister's (1979) announcement but it became the central issue in 1986. The people drawn from different institutions failed to work together as one well-knit group at the CDC. There are two reasons for this. First, they did not possess the expertise required for the development of materials and their dissemination islandwide. Second, they could not function effectively because of their double allegiance. On the one hand, they had their full workload at school, and on the other hand, they had to function as curriculum developers without any extra remuneration or any other inducement. What

was not realised by the CDB was the low degree of participants' motivation because they had to apply their minds to two different jobs.

The setting up of the CDC was perceived by the CDB to be the heart of every kind of reform in education but it failed to perceive that it could not function without devolving power and authority to the Director of the CDC. In fact, the perception of the Minister changed through time. From an institution that was initially intended to be a separate body, it finally became a part of the MIE but with the CDB solely responsible for all major decisions. The role ambiguity of the head of the CDC and the general frustration that it created among the personnel at the CDC were not recognised by the CDB as matters of concern. It is apparent that educational policy development was not a matter of stating principles, concerns and the establishment of strategies. There were other matters which deserved more urgent attention like the concern for keeping the personnel motivated.

#### **2.4 How were those issues perceived by different key actors at different times?**

The perception of various issues like the meeting of targets, personnel motivation, remediation and dissemination, and protests from the public varied during the passage of time. Three different Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983) occupied the Education Portfolio on three occasions. Each had his own way of doing things; each had his own views that were conditioned to a large extent by his Party and other influences from the society in which he lived. The manner in which the masses voted at the elections twice served as a background within which the Ministers functioned; they could in no way ignore the needs of those who voted for them and possibly for those who did not vote for them.

The Director of the MIE, as a key actor, maintained a consistent line of conduct. The change of government, however, did not influence his strategies or his targets.

## **Conclusion**

It is asserted that the perception of the Minister (1983) and the Director of the MIE on the Primary Schooling Reform changed through time. Two significant factors are observed to have brought this change in perceptions. The first was politically relevant incidents like the elections that brought in a new Minister into office. This reflected the voter turn-out, the competition and the partisan composition of the electorates. Despite the absence of information on the voters' preferences, it is possible to assume that the mere fact they voted for a particular candidate meant that he would in turn respond to their demands in the future.

The examination of the strategies of the Primary Schooling Reform, as they evolved with the changing circumstances, showed that the behaviour of the elite i.e the Minister (1983) and the Director of the MIE, was responsive to the environmental contexts. The politically relevant incidents like elections were historical in nature and demonstrated the effects of mass political behaviour. It is therefore asserted that the influences on the elite behaviour insofar as the strategies are determined were coming from the environment. The socioeconomic and political contexts were closely related to the decisions of the Minister.

## **Key Question**

- 3. To what extent were the Minister's (1983) decisions to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform influenced by the environmental conditions?**

This study demonstrates that an examination of the environmental contexts provides an illuminative insight into the behaviour of the policy-making elite. It is reasonable to say that the historical and the socioeconomic elements conditioned the range of elite behaviours in different situations. But the Minister was not detracted from his major goal, that being the improvement of primary education.

The creation of the CDB, with the Minister as its Chairman, was a clear indication of his personal interest in the Primary Schooling Reform. All resources



were under the control of the CDB and the major decisions were also taken by the CDB

New subjects like Environmental Studies, Creative Education and Movement Education were perceived to improve the literacy and numeracy aspects of education. The Minister was addressing the current problems of society and he was convinced that his decisions to pursue further the Primary Schooling Reform were compatible with the societal needs.

### **Sub-questions**

#### **3.1 How did the Minister (1983) perceive the changes in the management structures for the Primary Schooling Reform?**

There were two ways in which the Minister perceived the management structures. First, he perceived that the Primary Schooling Reform should be entrusted to the CDC in lieu of the MIE. Second, all decisions, particularly those dealing with finance and personnel, were to be the realm of the CDB with the Minister as its chairman.

Besides the organisational changes that the Minister considered vital for the success of the reform, it is reasonable to say that most important decisions were taken by the CDB. This created difficulties in the smooth functioning of the CDC and ambiguity in the role of the Director of the CDC.

#### **3.2 How did the characteristics of these structures affect the smooth running of the reform?**

The most significant management structure intended for the smooth running of the Primary Schooling Reform was the CDC set up by a decision of the Cabinet. The Centre, which initially was to be a part of the Ministry, became an integral part of the MIE. The structure of the CDC as proposed by the CDB was never implemented. This structure comprised, among other things, control over the physical resources and the staff seconded to the Centre. The extent to which the CDC would exercise autonomy

had never been determined. Besides, the Centre was not successful in welding together staff from various institutions under one roof as originally intended.

It is evident that the procedures for the operation of the CDC were inadequate in various respects, especially for addressing the problem of reform on the island. It is asserted that the CDB did not have a national policy concerning the CDC; this created the fundamental contradictions in the roles and responsibilities of the personnel, particularly that of the Director of the CDC.

With the setting up of the CDB under the chairmanship of the Minister, it became clear that all decisions would be taken by it and that all resources would be under its control. Further, the Director of the CDC was accountable to the MIE, the CDB and to the Permanent Secretary and the Minister. This created confusion and dissatisfaction.

### **3.3 What were the influences that conditioned the Minister's (1983) behaviour insofar as the new management structures were concerned?**

It appears that more stress was laid on the power structure of the CDC rather than on the conditions that needed improvement. Insufficient weight was given to the technical aspects of the CDC. Constrained by the prevailing power structure of the MIE on the one hand and the bureaucracy on the other, the Centre could not realise its full potential. It is apparent that the decision-makers were unaware of the danger of stifling from the top the very things they hoped to encourage: innovation and initiative among the teachers. The conflict in the reform seemed to lie between the CDB and the CDC; the latter had to act and initiate rather than receive instructions and requirements.

The strategy of the Minister after the August 1983 elections was to set up a strong institution like the CDC that would be under the direct control of the CDB. The Centre was perceived by those involved in the reform as significant but soon had problems of its own.

The Minister perceived that the MIE was working too much in isolation and not sufficiently in contact with the realities of the schools. The need for the CDC as an independent structure, responsible to the CDB, was appropriate for the Primary Schooling Reform. Such a Centre was intended to ensure the participation of a wider spectrum of people from different walks of life and representative of the population. This is a historical factor that is always in the background of all decisions of the Minister.

The aim was thus to plan a national initiative in the primary schooling innovation without incurring the risk of a central control of this reform by one institution except by the CDB chaired by the Minister. The strategy implied the maximisation of the existing physical resources and the pooling of manpower resources and foreign aid.

Although there is very little evidence of pressures from society, it is asserted that the Minister knew about the needs of the society.

## **Conclusion**

In an engagement to fine-tune the Primary Schooling Reform, decisions were taken by government to create the CDB and then CDC. Both these management structures in turn had problems of their own. The CDB appeared to be an elaborate bureaucracy of the Ministry that did not respond to the demands of the CDC. It centralised all decision-making without being fully aware of operations at the grassroots level. Even the prevailing structure of the MIE under which the CDC was functioning was not responding to the activities of the CDC. The CDC thus posed a problem in systems design and operation.

However, it is affirmed that the Minister had his own way of doing things and took decisions that, according to him, were rational and which responded to the needs of society.

## **Key Question**

### **4. To what extent did the environmental conditions influence the Minister's (1983) decisions?**

When the announcement of the Primary Schooling Reform was made by the then Minister in September 1979, it is evident that the decision was conditioned by the historic-geographic and socio-political conditions. International aid appears to have had an influence on the Minister, as the aid donor provided him with vital data as well as the required assistance.

The change in government in June 1982 that brought in a new Minister resulted in the freezing of the reform. The Minister (1982) perceived that the reform was not what people wanted and the mass political behaviour at the elections seemed to confirm his perception. But the August 1983 elections confirmed that the community at large wanted reform because they voted for a new government and a new Minister (1983) was ushered in. The political perspective of this Minister was different from his predecessor. The Education Portfolio provided him with an opportunity to lay emphasis on the Primary Schooling Reform. His perception was that the September 1979 announcement was pointing in the right direction and responding to the socioeconomic and political contexts of the island. The lack of protest from vested interests indicated the appropriateness of the reform.

The change in orientations of the reform were perceived to give a greater impetus to the reform and the Minister assumed a leading role. The reform is thus considered to be highly politicised.

## **Sub-questions**

### **4.1 What were the most predominant influences on the Minister (1983) at one particular time than at another?**

The September 1979 announcement was influenced by the historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition and the international aid donors. After the June 1982 elections, the Minister was influenced by mass political behaviour that

brought him to office. The situation changed after the August 1983 elections when a new Minister was ushered in. It appears that this Minister (1983) was considerably influenced by the 1979 announcement and the historical evolution of the events. His behaviour was consistent with the changing patterns of the socioeconomic and political contexts.

It appears that the governmental structure had no predominant influence on the Minister (1983), whereas the international aid continued to shape his thinking. Politically relevant incidents like elections were to have a long term effect on the Minister (1983).

#### **4.2 How were those influences perceived by those other than the Minister (1983)?**

The key actors, besides the Minister, were the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary who were the members of the CDB. They appear to recognise the socioeconomic and political factors that served as a backdrop to the Minister's decisions. Politically relevant incidents like elections indicated that mass political behaviour was of significance in the understanding of the Minister's behaviour. These key actors, in particular the Director and the Permanent Secretary, were conscious that they too should respond to the changing circumstances in the environment. The predominance of the political conditions made the key actors look more towards the Minister for guidance rather than towards the grassroots level where the actual changes were expected.

#### **4.3 How far were the senior officials influenced by the Minister's behaviour?**

There is evidence to suggest that power and authority were centralised at the CDB and rested in large measure with the Minister. But there is no evidence to suggest the extent to which the senior officials responded to the Minister's decisions and the extent to which the Minister influenced them in turn. From the experience of the

researcher at the Ministry, it is suggested the senior officials, like all civil servants, responded fairly well to the Minister's instructions.

## **Conclusion**

The historic-geographic and socioeconomic conditions, mass political behaviour and the politically relevant incidents influenced the behaviour of the elite. The influence of international aid donors appear to be greater before the initiation of the reform than afterwards. After the August 1983 elections, it is asserted that the Minister's behaviour related more closely with the mass political behaviour than with the other environmental contexts.

## **A Synthesis of Elite Behaviour in Education Policy in Mauritius**

The elements of the synthesis convey that the elite consist of the Minister, the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. The Ministers' (1979 and 1983) behaviour was a rational response to the situations in which they operated. The Minister (1983), for example, wished the Primary Schooling Reform to succeed and with this end in view, he created the Curriculum Development Board (CDB), the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), brought in new subjects like Environmental Studies, Creative Education, and Movement Education in the schools, for he was convinced that these changes were necessary for improving the quality of primary education.

The analyses of Section 2 of Chapters 5, 6, and 7 respectively are illustrated in terms of historic-geographical conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid, and politically relevant incidents as they influence the elite behaviour. Such analyses demonstrate the various constraints that the elite had to face and, consequently, they had to adapt themselves

to a whole range of circumstances across time. They also showed the strategies adopted by them to cope with the situations.

The study of the elements of the modified Hofferbert model as they interact with the elite have been examined. It becomes apparent that the elite, here the Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983), were a part of the large scale social adaptation. There is strong evidence to suggest that the elections were a strong determinant of elite behaviour. A change in government changed the course of events because the elite had to respond to mass political behaviour. It also appears that the elite were more concerned with the principles and strategies rather than with situations that required immediate attention.

It emerged that at a particular time in human history when conditions were favourable, the Minister (1979) launched the Primary Schooling Reform, and the other Minister (1983) created management structures like the CDB and CDC and included new studies like Environmental Studies, Creative Education and Movement Education. Such circumstances established a particular elite rationality that responded to the contexts. It is reasonable to say that the Ministers (1979 and 1983) had a considerable amount of political will to bring about changes without upsetting the existing situations.

An understanding of the actions of the elite, which must be at once general and specific, according to the modified Hofferbert model, should maintain three properties:

1. the elite live in the society and are a part of history;
2. the elite are endowed with authority and this has to do with the Constitution, as referred to in Chapter 5, and in turn with mass political behaviour; and
3. the elite may also manipulate situations to reduce conflicts and this is clearly reflected in the Director's response to the protest from the PTA's in December 1979 and the GTU in April 1981.

The Director of the MIE, the Permanent Secretary and the senior officials who were non-political, serving the political elite, were subservient to the latter. They were

influenced, not only by society around them, but also by the political elite close to them who might use their authority, status and possibly coercive power as conferred upon them by law. This relationship made the situation all the more complex.

The vested interests generally remained aloof from the elite but made their presence significantly felt close to the elections. Thus, it is asserted that the Ministers (1979 and 1983) adapted their behaviour to the changing circumstances in a manner as to respond to the needs of the electorates.

A change in the political elite brought about as a result of mass political behaviour at elections would have its effects even at the lowest levels of the governmental institutions. For example, there was a temporary freeze of the Primary Schooling Reform when the Minister (1982) took over. The senior professionals were left to find their own way in terms of resources; they tried to fill in the "vacuum" through "patchwork". Very few transactions occurred between the Minister (1982) and the senior professionals, but certainly the quality of relationship changed between the Minister (1982) and those who served him. The Minister tightened his authority and was in the process of strongly centralising the political structure of the nation when the elections came in August 1983. The situation however, changed drastically when the new Minister (1983) was brought into office by another election where the masses voted for a change. The relationship between him and the vested interests on the one hand, and those who served him, was in response to the mass political behaviour expressed at the elections.

The Minister (1983) had a different style of conduct compared to his predecessor. He renewed the links with the UNDP and created new management structures to strengthen the reform.

Some difficulties in the understanding of the elite behaviour arise. The elite adaptation or non-adaptation is difficult to define and measure. The elite make many decisions against serious odds. They take the risks against political uncertainty. They possibly weigh the risks and the consequences of the failure and they change the strategies which are non-measurable. The measurement of elite behaviour is, however,



risky because of the complexity of society. Socioeconomic and political organisations are equally complex and they could only be understood if precise information is available through actual observation of their relationship with their environment. No Minister will allow himself to be observed from close quarters and this is a limitation of the study as noted in Chapter 1.

When elite behaviour is not as expected, it is necessary to pursue the analysis and to discover if there is some good reason for this behaviour. There is therefore a need to understand the elite behaviour from the elite's vantage point. But again, rationality is a complex matter. What will appear rational to one person who observes may be non-rational to another one at that specific time. And it is difficult to gauge elite behaviour with complete accuracy. This view is supported by Hofferbert (1974: 231) who argues that " . . . the most difficult to measure is elite behaviour. And of all possible linkages, the most difficult to formulate and observe are those between other sectors (of the model) and elite behaviour."

## **Conclusion**

Elite behaviour is understood only in the context of history. Their relationship is significantly historical. The explanation is contained not only in the present but also in the shifting adaptation to the context. Figure 8.1 illustrates the adaptation of the elite to changing circumstances. It also shows the pre-elite elements, and the most significant and politically relevant incidents like elections that condition the actions of the elite. The socioeconomic system changes: it was different from the one before and will be different in the future. It is to these changes that the elite have to respond to.

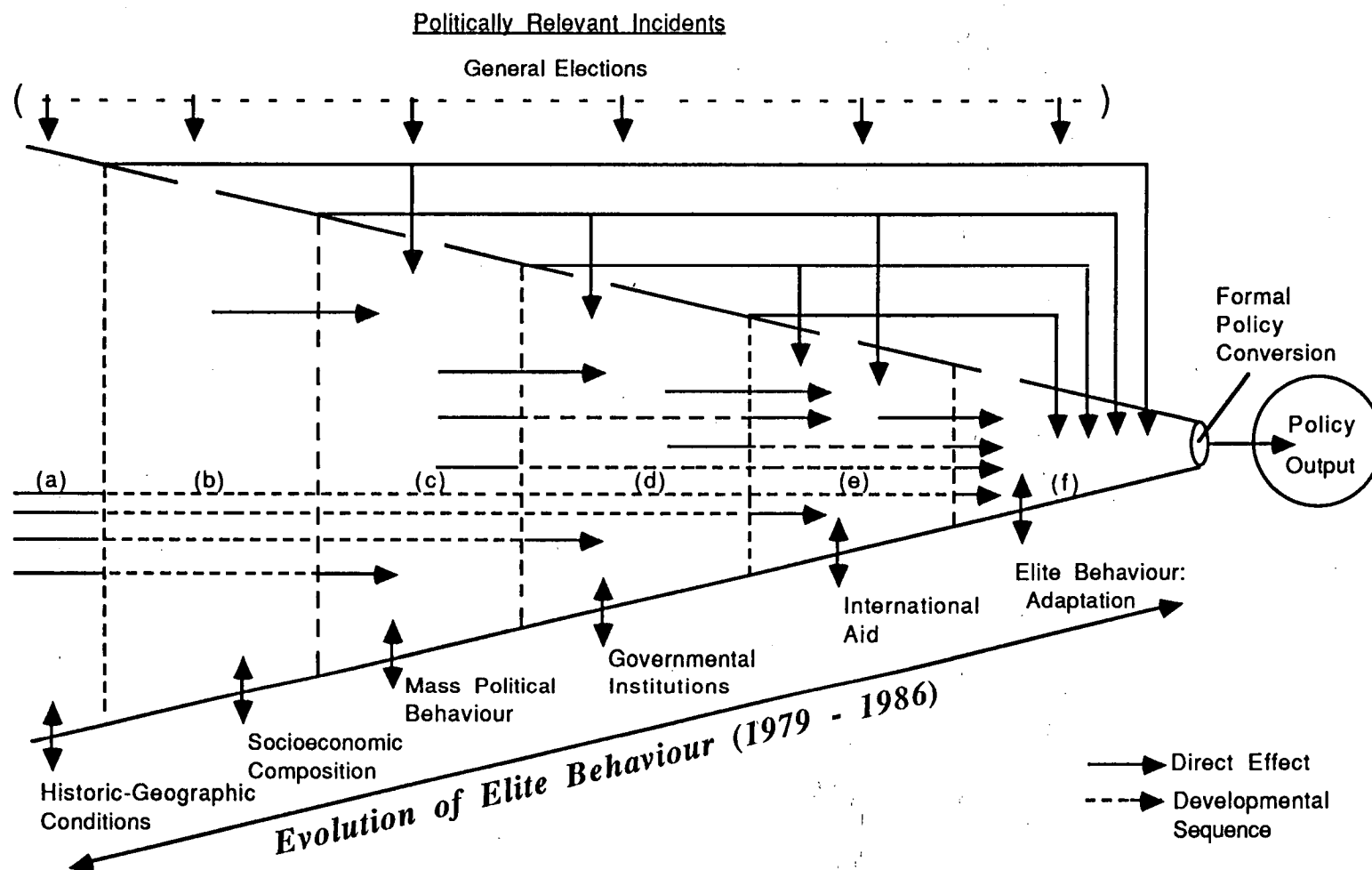


Figure 8.1 A Model of Public Policy for Mauritius

## **Implications for Theory Development**

The modified Hofferbert model as presented in Chapter 4 is suitable for analysing different policy problems. In particular, while the models of developed and developing countries are emphasized in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, the modified Hofferbert model appears useful for analysing many important policy issues, especially when policies in developing countries are considered. A proper application of the modified Hofferbert model helps to enhance understanding of the policy domain by relating explicitly the elements like the historic-geographic conditions, socioeconomic composition, mass political behaviour, governmental institutions, international aid and politically relevant incidents as they condition the actions of the elite. Among other determining factors, the system model (Easton, 1965; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975) as well as the Circular Process Model (Rein and Rabinovitz, 1975, Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980) consider the significance of the environment in so far as it influences the policy domain.

The dependency approach, as outlined in Chapter 3 and incorporated in the Hofferbert model as presented in Chapter 4, provides an insight into the various aspects of dependence and interdependence. International aid for educational development is a crucial factor that affects policy development generally in developing countries like those within the three clusters of island states, namely the West Caribbean, the South West Indian Ocean and the South Pacific islands, and in Mauritius specifically. The aid donors influence the actions of the political head who is also conscious of the economic, political and the socio-technological dependence.

This research concludes that the elite, comprising a few individuals, were responsible for major decisions. They were the Minister, the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. They were the initiators and contributors to educational policy. The Minister (1983), in particular, was responsible for giving legal authority to a number of decisions that he took after receiving advice from the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. Further, the decisions of the Cabinet to set up new studies like Environmental Studies, Creative Arts and Movement Education, and the

CDC were significant. The influences of the vested interests, namely the different socio-ethnic groups, the PTA's, teachers and parents in general were relatively less dramatic than those of the UNDP. The view is that any theory development may as well consider the role played by a small group of people in the decision-making processes.

A public statement of intention by the Minister (1979) to launch the Primary Schooling Reform that would bring an improvement in the quality of life involved a certain amount of risk that characterised human behaviour in changing political and economic conditions of Mauritius. The Ministers (1979 and 1983), in particular, were aware of the risks involved in committing a change that covered all the Primary Schools of the islands. In order to minimize the risks involved in such an islandwide programme of change, the Minister (1983) chose to use the existing infrastructure and personnel, and sought expert advice. Mauritius became a recipient of aid from the UNDP whose influences varied over time. For instance, the politically relevant incidents, like general elections that occurred twice in an environment in which the aid donor was operating, considerably influenced the reform. Political stability after the 1983 general elections accelerated the activities of the UNDP.

The concept of innovation requires an adjustment of administrative structure and performance to changes in conditions in the environment. It means an adaptation to the changing circumstances, the evolution of the clash between the policy intent and the concentrations of power held by existing institutions like the MIE and interest groups like teachers and inspectors on the one hand, and the Government on the other hand.

Any theory development may consider two aspects concerning the statement of intention of the Minister (1979). First, it may consider some principles regarding the necessary administrative functions in the development and implementation of the statement of intent of the Minister in September 1979. Second, these principles can then be applied to a more appropriate design of administrative structure to ensure a closer fit between the statement of intent and the actual outcomes. As demonstrated in

the Case Study, such a design has to reckon with the specificity of the environmental context which is ever-changing. Hence, it should have an inbuilt flexibility within it to cope with contingencies.

The standard hierarchical model of administration as revealed in this case study proved wholly inadequate and equally unworkable for the elite perceived the Primary Schooling Reform in different terms. First, the funds that were allocated for the Primary Schooling Reform were not under the control of the Director of the CDC but rather under the control of the MIE and the CDB. Similarly, major decisions were taken by the CDB and the MIE. The managerial model of setting objectives and organising services to meet those objectives required reasonable stability and the organisation of services. To meet those objectives required reasonable stability in operating conditions and general commitment to those objectives by the persons directly involved. On the one hand, the personnel at the CDC were not a closely knit group although they were working under the same roof, and on the other hand two general elections held in June 1982 and August 1983 disturbed the environment within which the elite were taking action. Second, there was an unclear distribution and definition of authority and responsibility. The Director of the CDC, for example, had to report at different points, namely to the CDC, the MIE and the Ministry.

Authority to initiate reform was centred exclusively at the level of the elite which comprised the Minister, the Director of the MIE and the Permanent Secretary. The patterns of authority required redesigning to facilitate decision-making by subordinate organisations, like the CDC, that could then become contributors to the innovative process. The new designs would provide new insights into the practice of authority patterns which would lead to more effective performance in educational policy specifically in Mauritius and generally in developing countries.

The educational bureaucracy revealed the critical problem in securing effective performance. There was difficulty in locating authority at multiple decision-making points in the large and complex organizational structure of the Ministry established for the delivery of services. There were unclear definitions of responsibility that created

"escape hatches" (Clay and Schaffer, 1984). Any theory development should incorporate such a model of decision-making.

There is evidence to suggest that the elite behaviour should be treated as a signpost for the understanding of the policy domain. No theory development can ignore this crucial aspect. In this research, it is asserted that two modifications of the analysis of elite behaviour should be made to enhance the understanding of the way policy is made and implemented in developing countries generally and in Mauritius specifically. First, the present state of the elite behaviour is judged and lived in relation with the known past, i.e. historic-socio-political-economic context, the present and the expected future. The past is not intelligible without a knowledge of that past. Thus the study of elite behaviour is nothing if not historical.

Second, certain broad notions are evident in the influences from the environment of the elite, but such notions require further refinement with more extensive research. However, it is possible to indicate through the conceptual framework which draws from a considerable body of literature why the behaviour of the elite responded to the larger politico-socioeconomic context in which the elite operated. To ignore the effects of historical change on the elite behaviour is to misunderstand the inner workings of government as described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

The broad notions are that the actions of the elite, here those of the Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983) in particular, are determined by the historical, socioeconomic and political conditions. This meant that the actions can be understood in the context of the interrelationships between the elite and the environment and this is significantly historical.

The society around the elite is an evolutionary type and therefore different from the one that came before and will be different in the future. Emerging at a particular point of time, the elite has to adapt to a wide range of situations in order to adopt various decisions. The Minister, in particular, takes risks that are worth taking in their perception in order to satisfy those who voted for him.

Some general theoretical implications are suggested after the appraisal of the modified Hofferbert model. First, the minimal context of elite behaviour cannot be understood without the context of the ethno-religious groups of which they are a part and to which they are responsive. Even the actions of the personnel at the CDC, who form part of the different social groups, are unintelligible unless the constraints imposed by the management structure like the CDB are known. Likewise, the activities of the Minister (1983) make no sense without an awareness of the resources and the constraints he faces. This has implications for theory development. The problem-oriented Primary Schooling Reform tells us mostly about the actions of the Minister but very little about the environment. It is suggested that more needs to be known about all aspects of the activities of the Minister and the way he responds at different times.

Second, it argued that the dynamics of elite behaviour are unique in this case because the context is unique. The history of Mauritius is unique and this conditions the socioeconomic structures. Without a reasonably complete knowledge of the context and the formulation of the full effects of the behaviour of the elite and the response of the society around him, it is not possible to generalise about the crucial relationships.

The case study as such imposes "no anti-theoretical bias . . . an excellent instrument for . . . beginning to develop theory about it" (Ostrom cited in Bock, 1962: 114). The presumption is that the elite, here the Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983), behaved in a rational way. But it is argued that unless all aspects of the situations in which the elite makes decisions are captured, the picture of elite behaviour can be distorted. All the pre-elite elements of the modified Hofferbert model should be considered and the information mastered to understand all aspects of the situation. Thus the conceptualisation of elite behaviour should be based on the thorough understanding of the complexity of the system.

## **Implications for Future Research**

The analysis highlights the characteristics of elite behaviour within the Mauritius setting. These are rationality, risk-taking and adaptability. The findings about the elite are few but they are useful in three ways. First, they are a guide to the understanding of the elite's actions and, second, they provide knowledge about the influences on elite that may serve as a guide for policy. Third, this study serves as a guide for further policy research not exclusively in education but also in other fields. This view is consistent with that of Merilee and Thomas (1989: 243) who studied the behaviour of policy elites in twelve developing countries in diverse fields, and they argue that such a study " . . . can serve as a basis for further research into the political economy of policy reform."

There is a need to emphasize the specificity of the elite adaptations to local conditions as well as to overseas conditions imposed by aid donors like the UNDP and the World Bank. Whereas the elite-government relationship represents the general social structure, it is clear each is unique. In a similar way, the elite-society relationship is unique but similar in one way: they both have to adapt themselves but the exact problems and strategies for each are numerous and varied. In general then, whereas both society and elite could be treated as one single unit, the actual behaviour of each must deal in specifics. Further, the elite although a part of society, have a behaviour of their own. The need is thus to collect more information about the elite and the society at large. It is argued here that to make policy without the deep understanding of the context is unwise.

This study, which is the first of its kind for Mauritius, is intended to create an awareness of the need for using basic research data for developing policies. Such data should ensure that alternatives have been examined in the light of the institutional and administrative structures and the groundwork fully laid in a manner to reduce uncertainty and the risk elements.

The modified Hofferbert model can be utilised as a starting point in building a framework for other case studies in the policy domain. Such case studies may further



confirm the findings of this study and consequently further refine the modified Hofferbert model.

## **Implications for Mauritius and Developing Countries**

The new framework that has emerged from the modified Hofferbert model can be further tested in the Mauritius situation and in other developing countries like those mentioned in Chapter 3, with further case studies in education. These may refine the model and may suggest new methodologies for addressing varied problems in education. They may contribute to a better understanding of the unique situations that prevail within the Mauritius setting in particular, and in developing countries generally. This refined model could be used individually or in combination with other methodologies and frameworks to explore the reality as it exists at specific times in developing countries.

By far the major implication for Mauritius and developing countries is that, since there may be a large number of documents that have accumulated through time and which may be lying dormant, there is a need to unearth, explore and communicate such materials that have so far not been brought up in this research. Such knowledge might otherwise be lost or kept locked up in the Ministry or will remain a professional mystery except to a small group of senior officials. There is no doubt that new knowledge organised systematically by nationally-based researchers may be more useful to the government than the foreign writings based on foreign experiences. Such an approach will throw more light on the way the government is working and consequently may help in determining future research priorities. A time will come when the legislature will look to research that produces "unobjectionable" (Selwyn, 1984) data for the development of policies. This will bring the researcher closer to the politician and will ensure a more responsible and calculated approach to policy.

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## Appendix

An Interview Questionnaire was prepared to be administered to 123 respondents covering a large cross-section of the Mauritius population. The languages utilised during the interview were French, English, and Creole (pidgin French) which is widely used in the island.

It was brought to the knowledge of the respondents that the Honourable Sir K. Jagatsingh, Minister of Education, announced the launching of the Primary Schooling Reform in September 1979 at the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE).

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

**A. These questions covered the period between January 1979 and May 1980**

1. What are your views about this announcement? What could have been the influences on the Minister's actions?
  - 1.1 How easily manageable was this announcement? What were the reactions of the Director of the MIE and the officials of the Ministry to this announcement?
  - 1.2 Was there any move from any quarters to maintain or change the Minister's intention? Was there any tension from anywhere?
  - 1.3 What were the qualities of the target groups and what effects this decision could have on them?
  - 1.4 Why was this decision called "a coordinated nationwide curriculum and evaluation reform movement, primary through secondary" (MIE, 1979)?

2. What was the issue that this declaration was attempting to set right? What were its goals? How were those goals interpreted?
  - 2.1 What were the various issues in education in general and specifically in the primary sector?
  - 2.2 Who were those who had a greater influence in the shaping of the announcement?
  - 2.3 What were the issues that emerged as a result of this announcement? Which were those that changed over time?
3. To what extent do you think that the announcement implied a financial commitment on the part of the Minister?
  - 3.1 Was there any financial commitment from the Ministry or from other sources? How did the Minister perceive foreign aid as a support to the Primary Schooling Reform? What are your views on the assistance already provided by the UNDP to the Lower Secondary Reform and the Pre-primary sector? Were there possibilities for further UNDP aid?
  - 3.2 Was there any study done to find out the financial requirements?
  - 3.3 What were the possible human and physical commitments?
4. What were the major strategies selected for shaping the Minister's decision? How appropriate were they? What were their characteristics? Were they in line with the issues?
  - 4.1 What were the strategies that changed with time? Why did they change?
5. Which institutions were responsible for the launching of the Primary Schooling Reform?
  - 5.1 In what way their structures were affecting the reform?

5.2 How was the reform planned to be monitored?

5.3 Which factors e.g. historical, geographical, social, political and economic, enhanced or limited the initial accomplishments of the reform?

**B. These questions covered the period between May 1980 and April 1986.**

6. Which were the significant events that according to you had an influence on the reform?

6.1 To what extent do you think the change in political regime in June 1982 had an impact on the reform? How do you perceive that impact?

6.2 How far did the situation change after the August 1983 elections? How did the Minister (1983) perceive the Primary Schooling Reform?

6.3 Which factors in the environmental context influenced the Minister (1983)?

6.4 Which factors according to you were most influential on the Minister (1983)?

7. What were the issues that emerged after August 1983? In what way were those issues different from the pre-June (1982) and the pre-August (1983) periods?

7.1 Which were the structures set up to pursue further the Primary Schooling Reform? How effective were they?

8. What were the pressures from the vested interests (teachers unions, lobbyists, PTA's and parents) that were perceived to influence the Ministers (1979, 1982 and 1983)? How did the Ministers respond to such pressures?

8.1 What are the changes you think have occurred in the primary schools? How do you perceive them?

9. To what extent do you think that the environmental factors influenced the Ministers' (1979, 1982 and 1983) decisions generally?

9.1 How were those influences perceived by those other than the Ministers?